new Masses

JANUARY 8, 1935 10c

The Truth about the Crawford Case

How the N.A.A.C.P. "Defended" A Negro into a Life Sentence

By MARTHA GRUENING

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New Masses

JANUARY 8, 1935

THE answer of American jingoism to Japan's ambitions in the Pacific is to fling the "greatest armada in history" over the western waters. Surface warships to the number of 177 and 554 airplanes will swing out in a field of 5,000,000 square miles of Pacific Ocean. The huge sea force is to concentrate in late April in the three strategic centers of the west coast: the San Pedro-San Diego area, San Francisco Bay and Puget Sound. From there the main body will proceed to Pearl Harbor, the gigantic naval base at Honolulu, from which the so-called "war games" will be directed as far as Midway Island, 1,160 miles west of Hawaii. The maneuvers were ordered before Hirosi Saito delivered Japan's denunciation of the three-power naval treaty, but their announcement was timed to share the front page with that event. More than fifty thousand men will go with the ships, men like the "Sailors of Cattaro" in the fine play given by the Theater Union, indifferently fed and miserably paid. These men come from thousands of working-class homes, most of them on relief or on the ragged edge of it. The ships were built by American workers. The cost of the maneuvers will mount into a staggering sum per day. This bill also will be paid by the American masses. What does the jingo naval president Roosevelt, what does Wall Street, care about all this, so long as they can back up their fight with Japan to gobble up Chinese and Latin American markets? The scrapping of the three-power naval ratio means the scrapping of practically the last of the arms "limitation" pacts entered into by the powers in recent years. The four-power pact and nine-power pact, as former Secretary of State Stimson declared, are unworkable without the naval treaty. Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations will take effect in a few months. The tense war situation of 1931, when the fleet was last in the Pacific, will be repeated.

DROPPING THE BALLAST — *William Sanderson*

WITHIN a week, two items appeared in the daily press which shed considerable light, first, on the parlous nature of the business "recovery" of the past year, second, the degree of involvement of the government credit in that of private industry. Under the date of Dec. 29, a Washington dispatch to The New York Times reports that during the year 1934 the P.W.A. advanced $193,276,500 to 30 railroads. These moneys provided, according to the dispatch, 150,000,000 man-hours of work. They made possible the purchase of the 15,000 new freight cars during the year, the modernization of equipment, the manufacture of the new streamlined trains, as well as the electrification of the Pennsylvania Railroad for nearly its entire route between New York and Washington. These moneys are, of course, an addition to the nearly 500 million dollars which have been advanced to the railroads by the R.F.C. and which have gone not into direct production and employment, but to pay interest and principle on their funded debt to the banks. The other news item is

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dated Denver, Dec. 21, and announced that the R.F.C. had taken over and will run the Denver & Salt Lake R.R., "to protect federal loans to the Denver & Rio Grande Western R.R." of which the Denver & Salt Lake is a part.

THE R.F.C., the report went on to state, holds $10,763,150 of the $13,500,000 bonds and other obligations of the road. With this move, it also became known that the R.F.C., holds "as collateral for loans, stock giving full or part control of more than 5,000 miles of line." It is now admitted that some 75 railroads operating 16 percent of the total mileage of the country are in receivership or in the hands of coordinators, and that railroad insolvencies would now be greater if it were not for the P.W.A. and R.F.C. loans. Furthermore, during the coming year, millions of dollars of railroad obligations fall due which cannot possibly be met from current income. The R.F.C. will either have to advance these new millions to save them from bankruptcy as well as the banks and insurance companies that hold large portions of these maturing bonds, or take them over for operation, as it did in the case of the Denver & Salt Lake R.R.

THESE revelations give added point to our remarks in the preceding issue of THE NEW MASSES bearing on the solvency of the banks and other fiduciary institutions upon which the government debt is being unloaded. The greater part of the investments of our insurance companies in 1934 were in federal bonds. These holdings, amounting to nearly 1.5 billion dollars, are now double what they were two years ago. Together with municipal and state obligations—all among the most non-liquid securities on the market—they comprise about 30 percent of the assets of our insurance companies. Similarly with respect to the banks. As of June 30, 1934, the commercial banks of the country together with the twelve Federal Reserve Banks held nearly 14 billion dollars of the federal obligations. This was more than half of the total federal debt at that time. By now this sum is of course still larger, while the federal debt is rapidly rising to a sum nearly three-quarters the size of the total national income. No wonder then the government has had to pour billions of dollars into the banks to keep them in operation while most of their assets are becoming frozen. Thus, nearly 40 percent of the 6½ billion dollars advanced by the R.F.C. since its establishment in February, 1932, has been advanced to the banks. Banks received over $2,600,000,000 from the R.F.C. of which 1¾ billion dollars were loans to *going* institutions, or to closed banks for the purpose of reorganization or liquidation, and 920 million dollars went to the purchase of bank shares to build up their capital structure. According to Jesse Jones, director of the R.F.C., some 500 million dollars more will be required to keep the banks going. In this fashion, to keep the credit and business structure of the country from disintegrating, the government lends the "nation's leaders" its billions of credit, but to raise this credit it must borrow from the banks on the security of bonds which become tethers on the banking structure. At this time, according to no less an authority than Professor James W. Angell of Columbia University, the assets of the commercial banks of the country are less liquid than they were at the beginning of the crisis.

STEALING turpentine; not "dipping his mule"; writing a letter to a white girl; hitting back when attacked by a white man—these were some of the acts for which Negro workers were lynched last year. In six cases "no charge" was reported. In only three cases was rape charged; in three other lynchings the accusation was "attempted assault." These facts are made public by the International Labor Defense, which lists a total of twenty-five lynchings in 1934. One was committed in New York State. Mississippi heads the list with eight. Louisiana had four. "In the present compilation," says the I. L. D. report, "no murder was counted a lynching unless three or more persons, more or less organized for the purpose, participated." It points out that the addition to the list of Negroes murdered by individuals or by police confident that no punishment would follow "would bring it up into the hundreds." The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People lists only sixteen lynchings for the year. Dr. Moton, Negro educator and close friend of white leaders, admits fifteen. He gives his own state of Alabama only one, although the cases of Early Cook at Georgianna and of George Taylor at Birmingham, both shot to death by gangs, are well known. The policy of Dr. Moton and the N.A.A.C.P. is to minimize the responsibility of the upper class for the systematic subjection and killing of Negro workers. They strike off the list all lynchings in which they find that police or state officers participated. They have no wish to emphasize the fact that the Negro question has its roots deep in the evils of the profit system and southern feudal landlordism, on which they thrive. The I.L.D. statement points out that the Federal enforcement of the death penalty for lynchers is the only weapon against it, but that this is not to be expected without increased mass pressure. The Department of Justice has consistently refused to use the legal powers it already has to prevent lynchings. President Roosevelt's statement in a speech before the Crime Commission was widely construed as a tacit acceptance of lynching so long as it was confined to the South. The Bill for Negro Rights and Suppression of Lynching proposed by the League of Struggle for Negro Rights has the necessary teeth. The bill can be forced on Congress by persistent organized demands.

THE drive upon the Negro takes varied form in various sections of the land. The descendants of Jefferson Davis and Simon Legree prefer the simple and time-honored Dixie form—outright lynching. The technique is more subtle, more scientific, in the North. A fair example is the order of a Chicago court, that Jane Newton be examined at Psychopathic Hospital for marrying a Negro. The judge and the Chicago Hearst editorial writers took a leaf out of the Nazi book: like the Hitlerites who declared "Frenchmen are not human beings," the Americans tried to exclude Negroes from that category. The Northern adherents of Nordic supremacy encountered a setback when the psychiatrists pronounced Jane Newton "not only sane but an exceptionally brilliant woman." But the judge's action and its reception by the local newspapers prove to what lengths the ruling class will go to suppress the fight for Negro rights. Herbert Newton is a well known Communist leader who has fought openly and valiantly for the rights of all workers. Therefore it was he and his family who were singled out for so malicious an attack. The entire incident grew out of an effort to evict the Newtons from a jimcrow apartment house. The attempt was frustrated by the other tenants and an organized delegation of a hundred workers. Newton was arrested on charges of "disorderly conduct." As attempts increase to intro-

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duce Fascism into America the victimization of the Negro people increases. In Germany the Nazis used the Jew as the most convenient scapegoat. All indications here point to the inevitability that the Negro as well as the Jew (and all national minorities) will be the pretext for a general drive upon the masses.

THE deluge of abuse which has descended upon the Soviet Union for executing a group of terrorists who were seeking to overthrow the workers' government has come from almost every quarter. Liberals like Oswald Garrison Villard and the editors of The New Republic have vied with Isaac Don Levine and other Hearst writers in their denunciation of what they are pleased to call the "Soviet purge." No one can be amazed by the attitude of the Hearst papers. Hearst, just back from Hitler's Germany which he defends in his papers, chants exultantly in the New York American, "Stalin's bridge is falling down," while his chief editorial writer, the eminent pen-prostitute Brisbane, predicts the restoration of the monarchy in Russia. But the wails of grief uttered by the liberal press have been even more violent than the yellow editorials of Hearst. One can easily understand the liberals' "sympathy" for a "going concern"—with a nation which alone in this period of dismal economics, can build Dnieperstroys, improve living standards, raise wages and abolish unemployment. How can anybody passing as liberal deny the epochal achievements of the dictatorship of the proletariat? But the proletariat cannot achieve its successes without endless effort and ceaseless vigilance. Revolutions don't come plush-lined "with all conveniences." The enemies of the Soviet Union are still masters of five-sixths of the globe and they are determined to conquer that recalcitrant one-sixth. Hence the assassinations. Hence the executions. Events like these turn up the color of men's politics. True class allegiances come to the top. One must never forget that, after all, the liberal mind, for all its precious qualities, is fundamentally bourgeois.

THE creators and defenders of the Soviet are profound students of history. They know that a principal reason for the failure of the Paris Commune was a too great leniency toward the enemy. Marx wrote concerning the Communards of 1871: "If they are defeated only their 'good nature' will be to blame." He attributed a number of fatal errors to the "too honorable scruples" of the Parisian workingmen. That "monstrous gnome" Thiers, leader of the reaction, proved that counter-revolution is always insanely vengeful. After the Commune 40,000 men, women and children were mowed down—the Seine flowed red for days. But the Communards of 1935—the Soviets—have profited by history. They know the enemies of the U.S.S.R. will stop at nothing, sabotage, arson, murder, to achieve their goal: the utter demolition of the Soviet system. Today's Communards saw intervention in the years following the Revolution. They defeated it. Today they see assassination. The White Guardists succeeded in murdering Kirov. Leonid Nicolaev and thirteen other spies, arrested in Leningrad after the Kirov assassination, have, in a two-day trial before the Military Collegium of the Soviet Supreme Court, been proven guilty and executed. Nicolaev at first declared his motives were personal—discontent because of his family's poverty. He was given the lie by his own family's testimony. His confession revealed a number of alarming facts: first, the existence of the "Leningrad center," a group of terrorists pledged to the overthrow of the Soviet system; and second, the relationship between this group and a representative of an unnamed power who "offered to put them in touch with Leon Trotsky." As the Military Collegium stated, "The session established that this secret terroristic counter-revolutionary group, having no hope of realizing its criminal purposes except by terroristic actions inside the country, was aiming at armed intervention by foreign States." Many of the agents were recruited from among the former Zinoviev-Kamenev-Trotsky oppostion. Zinoviev and Kamenev, now in custody, will be tried by a special commission of the Commissariat of Internal Affairs.

A PLOT to "invade the White House and kidnap the President and his cabinet" is the latest fantastic accusation levelled at Communists by the Dickstein "un-American Committee." The charge was made by Walter S. Steele, of Washington, D. C., representing the American Coalition of Patriotic, Civil and Paternal Societies. The sole "evidence" is that the "kidnap plan" was discovered in a raid on the Minneapolis Workers' School during the teamsters' general strike last year. On the same day that Mr. Steele appeared, real and damaging evidence was presented of embryo fascist moves backed by American millionaires with a longing to dictate. Albert G. Christmas, secretary to Robert Sterling Clark, stated that he turned over $154,000 of Mr. Clark's money to Gerald C. MacGuire, Wall Street bond salesman. All

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but $33,000 was unaccounted for, but it was testified that Mr. MacGuire had $64,000 at the 1933 convention of the American Legion in Chicago, with which to swing the Legion's support of a "return to the gold standard." Also Samuel Glazier, an army captain of Baltimore, told the committee that Jackson Martindell approached him with the proposal to launch the "American Vigilantes" 500,000 strong with a backing of $700,000,000.

AN element of the grotesque appears in all of these schemes, but they nevertheless represent the desperate determination of capitalists to preserve themselves at all costs. That the woods are full of rich men ready to spend lavishly to bolster up any likely candidate—a Smedley Butler, Lawrence Dennis or William Pelley—is no surprise to those who know the financial backing given to Mussolini and Hitler before they reached power. But in order for fascist plans to succeed it is necessary to silence Communism, to smash the working class, beginning with the Communist leadership, to attack and distort Lenin's teachings, to raise the red scare. The Dickstein committee, originally set up to investigate Nazi propaganda in America, is carrying out this anti-working class role with the cheers of Hearst and the whole national machinery of radio and press. When a committee of New York workers visited Mr. Dickstein's home to protest, they were waylaid by police in the hallways and blackjacked. . . . In Chicago Hearst's papers are inciting an American Legion march "against the reds," called for Jan. 4. . . . Powerful protests should pour in to the members of the "un-American Committee." Mr. Hearst must be faced with a boycott by masses of readers. A beginning has been made in this direction in Chicago. A city-wide rally there on Jan. 8, will be the signal for launching an anti-Hearst movement through the country.

Betrayal by the N.A.A.C.P.

ELSEWHERE in this issue we publish an article by Martha Gruening on the Crawford case, a case widely known because it posed the question of the right of Negroes to serve on juries in the South—a fundamental question in the struggle of twelve million Negroes for civil rights. Miss Gruening, who is frankly a liberal and retains faith in the court structure of this country, has compiled an indictment against the policy of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which "defended" Crawford.

The N.A.A.C.P. and its supporters, The Nation and the Pittsburgh Courier, have belabored the International Labor Defense in season and out for its tactics. Few editions of these publications appear without an attack upon the I. L. D.'s position: that there can be no compromise in the fight for the rights of the Negro people, in the struggle for civil liberties of the working class.

Many persons ignorant of the issues involved have often asked—Who is right, the I.L.D. or the N.A.A.C.P.? The I.L.D. contends that legal defense must be bolstered by the concerted pressure of the masses of the people. The N.A.A.C.P. insists that courts are "fair," that "gentlemanly conduct" will get you further than "rowdy" demonstration.

The first sensation in the Crawford case was Judge James A. Lowell's refusal in Massachusetts to extradite the defendant to Virginia, on the ground that there the defendant would be denied his "constitutional rights." The judge's wish, however, to re-establish the conception of "impartiality" was promptly repudiated by the higher courts—the Federal Court of Appeals and the Virginia court. Nevertheless the N.A.A.C.P. refused to change its stand and reiterated its faith in the courts.

The jury question, fundamental in the struggle for Negro rights, towered over every other issue here. The N.A.A.C.P. collected funds on this basis. It declared this case to be "more important" than Scottsboro. It loudly avowed its faith in Crawford's innocence. At the trial, however, representatives of the N.A.A.C.P. failed to produce Negroes qualified to sit on the jury to prove the violation of their constitutional rights. The jury commissioner, a Southerner with all a Southern Bourbon's prejudices, said they had not found "any colored man of the County who seemed qualified for the service." Dr. Charles H. Houston, counsel for defense, "in a gentlemanly way" accepted the word of these "honorable gentlemen."

Crawford, of course, was found guilty, by an all-white jury, composed chiefly of farmers who require docile Negro help for their plantations. They honored Dr. Houston's wish to spare the defendant the gallows so that Crawford could help convict a Negro whom, in his forced confession, he had implicated in the murder. Crawford got life. And this the N.A.A.C.P. hailed as a great victory!

Despite the fact that the jury rights of the twelve million Negroes in this country were involved, Houston told the press that "under no circumstances did he plan to press for a reversal by a higher court."

These facts are readily ascertainable by examination of the records. They have been compiled for us by one who has worked with the N.A.A.C.P. in the past and who is puzzled and repelled by their conduct of this case. The N.A.A.C.P. cannot insist that this is "Red slander." Honest individuals from their own class can no longer keep silent at such betrayal.

This is not the first time the N.A.A.C.P. has abandoned the field. In 1931 it retained Steven Roddy, a K. K. K. lawyer, who left the Scottsboro boys to face the electric chair, without filing an appeal. In 1933 Dr. Houston "defended" Crawford into a life term.

The upshot of the question is this: the I.L.D., composed chiefly of workers, understands that there are two classes, and that the courts belong to the ruling class. The N.A.A.C.P. under the dominance of white and Negro bourgeois reformers, attempts to deny the conflict of class interests. The I.L.D., based on class struggle, knows that mass pressure upon the courts fundamentally affects the court's decision—in the same sense that mass pressure by strikers fundamentally affects the employers' position on wages, hours, living conditions. The N.A.A.C.P. is an instrument to conceal these class truths, and the Crawford case is incontrovertible evidence of its real role.

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Terror in "Liberal" Wisconsin

PAUL ROMAINE

MILWAUKEE.

IN THE first week of December a reign of terror against the workers of Racine, Wisconsin, began that has shown no signs of abatement to date. The acts of fascist violence have been directed against the working-class organizations in general and the Communist Party in particular.

This terrorism has been unleashed because of a whole series of successful struggles for relief waged by the employed and unemployed together. These organized demonstrations and protests have been led by such varied groups as the militant Wisconsin Emergency Relief Administration Workers (W.E.R.A.); Unemployment Council; Unemployed Workers' Committee of Action; and the Communist Party.

Events leading directly up to the terror were the Horlick strike; the occupying of the relief station by the unemployed for more than three hours; the packing of the seventh floor of the Court House by the workers to present their demands for increased relief to the County Board; later, the removal of a door by the workers in order to get into these same chambers; and finally — a picket line, four blocks long, that demonstrated at the Court House and paraded along Main Street to the relief station. The demands presented were very immediate and broad ones to which every worker subscribed.

Racine is a city of about 67,000 and is controlled by Horlick's, the First National Bank, Nash, J. I. Case and other similar corporations. Mayor Swoboda is an ex-Socialist and one of his principal pastimes is putting on sham battles with Chief of Police Lutter.

The bosses answered the growing militancy of the workers by organizing a "Vigilantes Committee" with the help of the police, American Legion officials and a few high-priced union chair warmers. The committee's first step was to announce in its own name and that of the American Legion that it would "drive the reds out of town by physical force." They then raided the headquarters of the Racine section of the Communist Party at 900 State Street. The doors were torn down, furniture smashed, papers, etc. taken and destroyed and the headquarters wrecked generally. Meetings protesting against the raid, several held in public schools, were broken up. Many of the meetings were not sponsored by the Communist Party but by other workers' organizations.

The Chamber of Commerce now began publicly demanding a fascist terror against the Communist Party and all militant workers, through its mouthpiece, The Racine Journal-Times, supported by Horlick. The Bar Association of Racine County, headed by large corporation lawyers, issued a long statement demanding that "radicals" (class-conscious workers) be tried under criminal-syndicalism charges—pointing out the existing statute that could be used for this purpose, since there is no criminal-syndicalism law in Wisconsin, a "liberal" state.

The Communist Party immediately re-established its office in the same building and arranged for a large protest meeting Dec. 8. Many workers' organizations were to be represented and a delegation of liberals (including a minister) and members of the Milwaukee branch of the League Against War and Fascism went to Racine. Lutter, the police chief, had vowed that not another meeting of "the Communists" would take place in Racine and he persuaded the landlord to refuse the use of the hall which had been rented. The meeting was held in another hall.

Then the headquarters of the Communist Party were stoned and windows smashed by hooligans. The police made no efforts to catch the hoodlums merely announcing that they were "looking for them." The League Against War and Fascism organized a protest meeting that was addressed by liberals, Socialists and Communists. The police chief said he had "been caught napping" but repeated that no further meetings would be held.

The Racine local of the Socialist Party and the Central Trades Council wasted no time in issuing statements and protests against this terrorism. The essence of their statements was that though they did not agree with the political line of the Communist Party, etc., they protested against the tactics of the vigilantes against the Communist Party and workers in general. Because of the tremendous rank and file sympathy in the Socialist Party and in the unions for the Communist workers, sympathizers, etc., there was little else for the leaders to do. Moreover, it seems the lessons of Germany and Austria have begun to sink into the heads of the more sincere leaders of some of S. P. locals.

On Dec. 13, in the morning, Sam Herman, one of the Communist Party organizers of Racine, was kidnaped from a busy street by two gangsters and driven to the outskirts of the town, where he escaped after a bloody beating. A witness stated that, "Two policemen saw everything that went on when he was kidnaped downtown and never did a thing."

Herman asked the gangster holding him in the back seat if he was a police officer and received the reply, "Don't ask me anything or I'll smash your face in." They asked him where Sekat lived. (Sekat is section organizer of Racine and out on bail in connection with the Horlick strike, in which he was framed-up.) Herman refused to answer. "Sekat is in for the same thing you are going to get," the kidnaper said.

The following night a meeting was held in Sokol Hall, attended by workers of all parties and organizations. It met to protest the attack on Herman, to take action in his defense, and to combat the general fascist activities in Racine. Suddenly the windows in the hall were shattered by rocks. The workers ran outside, saw two hooligans running toward a waiting car, and ran after them. As they closed in on the hoodlums a squad of police rushed out of the darkness of a side street and began pummelling and tackling the workers in football fashion. Meanwhile, the rock throwers escaped.

Herman went to the district attorney's office and was signing John Doe warrants for the arrest of his kidnapers when he was arrested at the instigation of Lutter on the charges of "criminal libel." These charges are based on the statement of Herman issued to the press: "I openly charge that Chief of Police Lutter, has knowledge of and was one of the organizers of this attack by the underworld element who kidnaped me on State Street yesterday before noon. . . . If anything happens to me he will be the guilty one. . . . This is the Merry Christmas that Lutter has prepared for the unemployed: a Merry Christmas of terror. The struggle will go on, as such fascist terror has never in history succeeded in stopping courageous fighters and their movements from carrying on."

This is a portion of the statement Lutter called, "belligerent and false." Herman's bail was set at $2,500.

During an investigation now being made by certain individuals from Milwaukee into the gangster-police-Legion-Mayor-Big Business tie-up in Racine a legionnaire under questioning admitted that the only "violent" action he could think of the "Reds" committing was their taking the door of the council chambers off its hinges, as mentioned earlier in this article.

Hundreds of protests have poured in on Mayor Swoboda, the Fire and Police Commission, Chief of Police Lutter and Gov. Schmedeman. Several delegations have gone to Racine from Milwaukee and a student and professional delegation is being organized at the University of Wisconsin by the N. S. L. and the L. I. D. to present protests personally.

The terrorism since Herman's kidnaping has continued. Workers have been arrested and intimidated; the store windows of two of Herman's bondsmen have been smashed, but as Herman stated, "The struggle will go on, as such fascist terror has never in history succeeded in stopping courageous fighters and their movements from carrying on."

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The Truth about the Crawford Case

How the N.A.A.C.P "Defended" A Negro Into a Life Sentence

MARTHA GRUENING

I will maintain the confidence and preserve inviolate the secrets of my client . . . so help me God.

The Lawyer's Oath of Admission.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People launched this week a South-wide campaign on the unconstitutional expulsion of Negroes from grand juries. Detailed instructions on procedure prepared by attorney Leon A. Ransom and Charles Houston of the Association's National Legal Committee were mailed to 112 branches in Southern and border states urging that immediate and vigorous steps be taken to fight further exclusion of Negroes from juries. The suggested outline of procedure is based upon that followed by the two noted lawyers in the celebrated George Crawford case in Virginia.

News Release of the N.A.A.C.P.
October 11, 1934.

IT IS of course good news that a South-wide campaign on the unconstitutional exclusion of Negroes from juries has been launched at any time. In view of the actual procedure of the "two noted members of the N.A.A.C.P.'s National Legal Committee" in the "Celebrated George Crawford case," however, the news is somewhat less exhilarating. Crawford, it will be recalled, was convicted in Leesburg, Virginia, by a petit jury from which Negroes were illegally excluded after being indicted by a grand jury drawn in the same manner. He is now in the state penitentiary at Richmond serving two consecutive life sentences, one imposed by the above-mentioned jury, one by a white judge on the second indictment to which Crawford pleaded guilty in fear of his life after being abandoned by his attorney, Charles Houston, who refused to plead for him. Mr. Houston further stated on this occasion, according to the stenographic transcript of this hearing, that he would not be a party to the proceedings "if Crawford is going to *repudiate his offer to me to help locate and identify Charlie Johnson*" (my italics). "Charlie Johnson" was Crawford's alleged accomplice in the murder of two white women in Virginia. Some months later, when Mr. Houston was engaged in a controversy with Helen Boardman and myself over the conduct of the case, the results of which were published in The Nation, he was still trying to run down Charlie Johnson and stated that he considered this was "a duty of the N.A.A.C.P. owed to the state of Virginia." Walter White, secretary of the N.A.A.C.P., who was present, when asked whether he agreed to this, refused to commit himself saying the matter was not one for him to pass on, but should be referred to the National Legal Committee. Mr. Houston should *not* however be confused with the prosecution in this case. Although it may seem a little puzzling at times to New Masses readers, I ask them to remember that Mr. Houston was retained and acted until his desertion of Crawford at the second indictment as counsel for the defense. In this capacity, moreover, he and his associates did a very thorough job of examining jury rolls in the Virginia counties in question and showed conclusively that Negroes were systematically and illegally excluded from them. Then, when Crawford had been convicted and sentenced by such a jury, they not only did not appeal the case but Mr. Houston, on the day after sentence was imposed, wrote the Virginia prosecuting attorney that the National Association was anxious to wind up the case and offered to plead Crawford guilty to the second indictment in return for a second life sentence. Why? To this question neither we nor anyone else interested in the case has ever received a satisfactory reply from anyone connected with the defense in its later stages. The facts we learned, however, in seeking such a reply are as follows:

On January 13, 1932, Mrs. Agnes Boeing Ilsley, a wealthy white woman, and her elderly maid, Mrs. Mina Buckner, were found murdered in the chauffeur's cottage on the Ilsley estate at Middleburg, Virginia. Their heads had been bashed in apparently by some blunt instrument, believed then and later by the prosecution to be an iron bootjack which was found covered with dried blood and hair in Mrs. Ilsley's bedroom. The murder was reported by Mrs. Ilsley's younger brother, Paul Boeing, who had been staying with her at the cottage and usually slept there. On the night before the murder, according to Paul Boeing's story, he had not slept at the cottage as was his habit but had gone to sleep in the big house on the estate to guard it from burglars, taking his dog with him. He guarded it from burglars by sleeping in an attic room on the third floor. He had been disturbed only once during the night by the banging of a shutter, but had gone to sleep again and slept through the rest of the night with no inkling of the tragedy at the cottage. At about nine o'clock the next morning he had returned to the cottage for breakfast and, on discovering the bodies, had rushed out in his pajamas and overcoat to give the alarm.

Paul Boeing inherited $25,000 under his sister's will and there were rumors also that he was the beneficiary of a large life-insurance policy carried by her. These rumors we have been unable to verify. The estate superintendents of insurance for Virginia and Wisconsin—where Mrs. Boeing had formerly lived—stated in reply to letters about it that the issuing and paying of such policies was not a matter of public record in either state. Mr. Houston last spring stated to us that the rumor was absurd and entirely without foundation but we were never able to learn what investigation if any he had made in the matter to reach this conclusion.

Paul Boeing was admittedly the discoverer of the bodies, the first person known to the authorities at the scene of the crime. He had, as one of Mrs. Ilsley's heirs, a pecuniary interest in and a possible motive for desiring her death. Yet he was not detained at the time and never, apparently, thoroughly questioned by either the Virginia or the county authorities. As Mr. Charles Houston put it, "Paul Boeing's friends would not let the authorities question him because he was unnerved." Some of these same friends further protected the understandably hysterical young man by carrying him off in an automobile to a neighboring estate and the authorities had to content themselves with rounding up Bertie de Neal, the former sweetheart of a former Negro chauffeur employed on the Ilsley estate and other poor colored people who were presumably not too "unnerved" or too influential to be questioned.

The murder, as stated above, was discovered at about nine o'clock of January 13. The afternoon Washington and Richmond papers for this same date already carried the story that a Negro chauffeur and ex-convict was being hunted for the crime. In fact, as Frank Getty wrote in The Washington Post, December 31, 1933, in reporting the Crawford case:

> Within an hour the fox hunting set to which Mrs. Ilsley belonged was riding an impassioned lathery man hunt from town to town through the bleak North Virginia countryside seeking a Negro suspect.

There was at this time not a shred of evidence to connect the Negro, Crawford with the crime. As far as anyone knew he had left the Ilsley estate—presumably for the North—the previous September. Within a day or two, however, witnesses had been found who saw or claimed to have seen him in the vicinity of the crime within twenty-four hours of it, and the man hunt increased in intensity.

Who was this George Crawford? He was actually an ex-convict, a mulatto in his late twenties or early thirties who had originally come from Georgia. In 1930 he was serving an eleven-year sentence for larceny in the penitentiary at Richmond with additional time for attempts to escape. At this time he saved the life of a prison guard, A. N. Coleman, when the latter was knifed by

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another convict. Crawford, who was a Trusty and is a short, stocky very muscular man, not only intervened at the risk of his own life but carried the guard out to a car and drove with him at top speed to the home of the prison doctor, thus, in the latter's opinion, saving his life. This prison doctor, Dr. Holt, was so impressed with the presence of mind shown by Crawford on this occasion that he helped him to obtain a pardon and Crawford later worked for him as a chauffeur. Doctor Holt at the time of Crawford's release was occupying the cottage at which the murder later occured. Crawford seems also to have done some odd jobs and acted as chauffeur sometimes for Mrs. Ilsley. During this time some liquor was stolen from the big house and Mrs. Ilsley suspected Crawford and tried to swear out a warrant against him. She failed because there was no evidence to connect Crawford with the theft. In September of the same year Crawford disappeared. As was learned later he went to Boston taking with him Mrs. Bertie de Neal, who had been Mrs. Ilsley's cook and who left her husband and children to go with him.

There was at the time the murder was discovered no known reason except Crawford's prison record to connect him with it, and the scene afforded no clues to bolster the case against him. Indeed in early reports the motive for the crime was said to be something of a mystery. The first report was that no robbery had been committed for Mrs. Ilsley's fur coat and a purse full of money were found near the body and valuable rings on her fingers. Later it was said that some cheap jewelry belonging to the maid was missing, but actually there was so little indication of robbery that the bodies were examined for evidence of criminal assault in the hope of establishing "the usual Negro crime" as the motive. When this failed it was said by those who were hell-bent on fastening the crime on Crawford that the motive was revenge—that Crawford returned to Virginia and murdered the two women because Mrs. Ilsley had tried to swear out a warrant against him the previous summer.

The story was spread that Mrs. Ilsley was afraid of him, that she had tried to swear out another warrant against him for a burglary committed at the big house on Christmas Eve, 1931; and that on the day before her death she had driven into Washington and consulted a private detective agency in regard to protection against him. This, however, was denied by Paul Boeing at Crawford's trial at which he testified that his sister had never been afraid of Crawford or had any trouble with him and that he did not know why she had consulted the detective if she had. It was also said immediately after the murder that microscopic tests revealed particles of a Negro's skin and hair under Mrs. Ilsley's nails, though this, too, was shown at the trial not to have been conclusively established. It was on such evidence, however, that the man hunt proceeded, supplemented by the discovery, within twenty-four hours of the murder, of Mrs. Ilsley's stolen car, which was found abandoned just outside Washington and was said to contain evidence incriminating Crawford—no less than a note in his handwriting.

For a year no trace of the suspect was found. This is the more remarkable because Bertie de Neal who had left him in December before the murder and returned to Middleburg, was rounded up and badgered every so often by the authorities. On one occasion they actually intercepted a letter and a fur coat sent to her by Crawford from Boston. On January 13, 1933, however, a Negro giving the name of Joseph Taylor was arrested in Boston on suspicion of burglary. While he was being held for trial on this charge it was discovered that his fingerprints tallied with those of the George Crawford wanted in Virginia for the Middleburg murders. These fingerprints, however, were not found at the scene of the crime—none in fact were ever found there or in Mrs. Ilsley's car—but were those taken at the time of Crawford's earlier conviction in Richmond.

The N.A.A.C.P Enters the Case

It was at this stage that the N.A.A.C.P. entered the case and through its Boston Branch put up a vigorous and effective fight for Crawford. As soon as his identity had become known, John Galleher, Virginia commonwealth attorney had come North to press the demand for extradition. The question was argued before the Massachusetts attorney general Bacigalupo on February 7 and 8, 1933. At these hearings Crawford was represented by Butler Wilson, a Negro lawyer and president of the Boston branch of the N.A.A.C.P. and by J. Weston Allen a former attorney general of the state. They introduced evidence to show that the alleged confession obtained from Crawford by Galleher had been obtained by duress and in violation of Crawford's constitutional rights, evidence tending to impeach the credibility of the witness who claimed to have seen Crawford in Virginia within a short time of the murder, evidence based on Helen Boardman's investigations for the N.A.A.C.P. in Middleburg showing the improbability of Crawford's getting a fair trial in Virginia and finally they produced seven reputable witnesses to Crawford's presence in Boston from September, 1931, to February, 1932. On February 18, however, Governor Ely granted the extradition. On the same day Mr. Wilson applied to the late Judge Lowell for a writ of habeas corpus.

On February 28 Judge Lowell handed down his famous decision refusing extradition on the ground that to return Crawford to Virginia for trial was to violate his constitutional rights since Virginia deliberately excluded Negroes from her grand and petit juries. It was an epoch-making decision—one of the clearest, strongest declarations in favor of the Negro's constitutional rights yet made in America, in itself an achievement to which the N.A.A.C.P. might well point with pride. This decision, however, was immediately appealed to the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals which promptly reversed it, and when the U. S. Supreme Court refused to review the Circuit Court's decision, Crawford was returned to Virginia. This was in October, 1933. The amended plea in the habeas corpus proceedings had been based in part on investigation made in Virginia, by Charles Houston, vice-dean of the Howard University Law School. After the extradition the case was in the hands of Mr. Houston who was assisted by Leon Ransom, Edward Lovett, and James G. Tyson, all colored lawyers of Washington, D. C.

What followed is a matter of record. Throughout the summer publicity and appeals for funds were sent out from the N.A.A.C.P.'s national office. One such appeal, carried on the back cover of The Crisis, the organ of the association, was worded in part as follows:

> *Careful and exhaustive investigations by the* N.A.A.C.P. have established that Crawford was in Boston at the time Mrs. Ilsley and her maid were murdered in Virginia.
>
> Victory means, first, snatching an innocent man from the electric chair and second, that states like individuals must come into court with clean hands.... Rush funds by telegraph, special delivery, or regular mail today to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 69 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Nothing was said in this appeal or any other that I ever saw about funds to help Virginia run down Charlie Johnson. It would seem reasonably clear from it that the N.A.A.C.P. at this time either believed in the innocence of Crawford and meant to put up a fight for him or was out to give this impression. The first intimation to the contrary began to appear in the reports of the trial held in December in the daily press. Particularly disturbing and puzzling were the reports in The Washington Post which covered the trial perhaps more fully than any other paper.

On December 15, 1933, the story carried by The Post read in part as follows:

> The defense in the Crawford trial tonight abandoned all plans for an attempt to prove an alibi. . . .
>
> Confronted throughout the day with an array of *uncontested* testimony regarding George Crawford's presence near the scene of the crime on the night before the crime, Charles Houston, chief of the defense counsel, announced no alibi witnesses would be called. (My italics.)

On December 16 The Post said:

> The defense lost an important point today upon the judge's ruling admitting the confession and *no attempt was made* to show that George Crawford . . . did not take part in the crime. It had been generally admitted that if the prosecution had been unsuccessful in introducing the Boston confession *the case against Crawford would not have collapsed.* (My italics.)

On December 17, reporting the conviction and life sentence, The Post said:

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> Defense attorneys announced they would not appeal. Actually they were overjoyed. . . . The Negro's attorneys headed by Dean Houston shook the prisoner's hand and then washed their hands of the case.

And finally on December 31, Frank Getty, the Post reporter, summing up the trial in a feature article amplified these statements as follows:

> They [the four Negro lawyers] could hardly find a man or woman, black or white, to say a good word for their client.[1] . . . He lied to his counsel and deceived them into taking the case, *then confessed* . . . and admitted that he had participated in the murder of two white women. . . . Palpably nonplussed . . . Dr. Houston, unable to put his obviously guilty client on the stand *entered no defense whatever* (My italics.)

How Getty and other reporters got the information on which such articles written before the time for Crawford's appeal had expired were based, has never been satisfactorily answered. There was at this time no public confession by Crawford on record except the obviously phony and wholly discredited confession allegedly made by him to Galleher in Boston, which he had consistently repudiated and refused to sign and which defense counsel had tried unsuccessfully to exclude at the trial. In the January Crisis, however, which appeared late in December, 1933, Walter White in a signed article entitled "George Crawford—Symbol" hailed the "conclusion of the Crawford case as one of the most distinguished victories for justice to the Negro yet won" and referred to Crawford *at a time when the latter was still facing trial on the second indictment, was still in jeopardy of his life and when the N.A.A.C.P. was still supposedly defending him* as "guilty under the law and by his own confession" and again as "guilty of a horrible double murder."

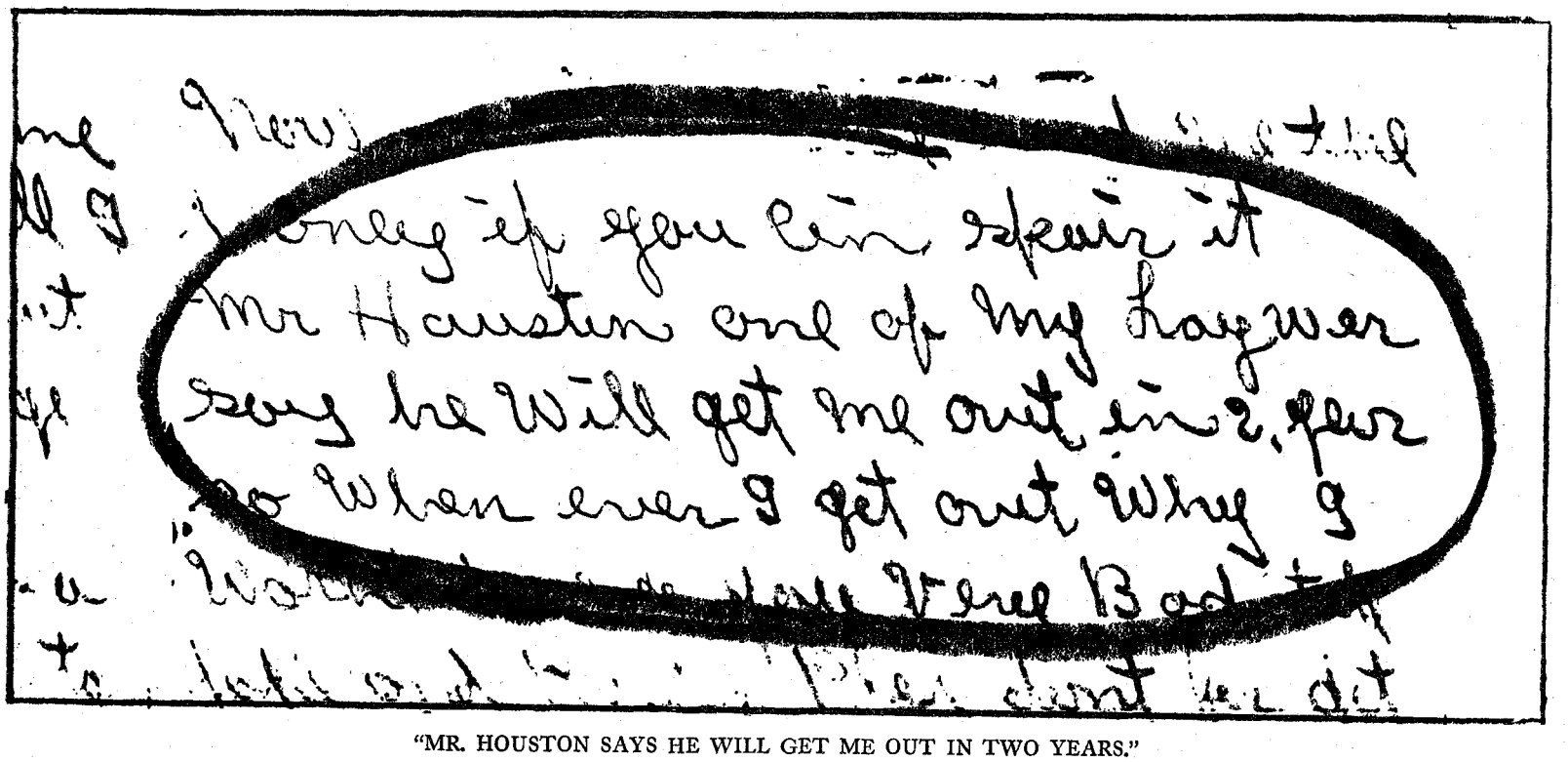
In response to questions put to him at the annual business meeting of the association early in January, 1934, Mr. White explained this by saying that the N.A.A.C.P. had taken the case believing in Crawford's innocence, but that he was in fact guilty and had confessed on the eve of the trial in a private interview with Mr. Houston. The circumstances, according to Mr. White, were that Mr. Houston had interviewed Crawford's former sweetheart, Bertie de Neal, in jail where she was being detained as a witness, that she had been reluctant to speak at first, but under prompting from the sheriff had admitted that she knew Crawford was in the vicinity of Middleburg on the day before the murder. Mr. Houston had immediately returned to Crawford's cell and "confronted" him with this story and Crawford had broken down and confessed. Subsequently we got a somewhat different version from Mr. Houston, but he admitted that this was the one he had for some reason, given to Walter White. The chief discrepancy in the two versions relates to the time of Crawford's confession, Walter White stating and apparently believing that this had occurred just before the trial, and that counsel up to this time believed in Crawford's innocence and meant to use the alibi witnesses, while Mr. Houston stated that he doubted Crawford's story almost as soon as he started investigating in Virginia.

According to Mr. Houston, moreover, Crawford did not break down and confess all at once but made several different, contradictory and partial statements at various times. He was not satisfied even last spring that Crawford had at any time told the whole truth. *"I never could get him to admit striking Mrs. Buckner,"* he said at one of our conferences. (My italics.)

Why he did not trust Walter White with these alleged facts before the latter wrote The Crisis article or undertook to explain the case to the N.A.A.C.P. members at the annual meeting is one of the minor mysteries in this very mysterious business.

Lack of space forbids any detailed account of the efforts made by Helen Boardman and others to get a more satisfactory and adequate explanation of the defense's failure to defend Crawford and in particular to weigh the unshaken testimony of the alibi witnesses against the much less credible prosecution witnesses in Virginia. After several months of correspondence between Miss Boardman, Mr. White and Mr. Houston, the only tangible results had been the abrupt and somewhat mysterious termination of Helen Boardman's job with the Association. Somewhat later Dr. Du Bois attempted to raise some questions as to the handling of the case in The Crisis. The Board of Directors of the N.A.A.C.P. thereupon passed a gag rule to prevent such

[1] Counsel seem to have been particularly assiduous in spreading this report. It was quoted to me as coming from Mr. Houston on several occasions. Helen Boardman, however, found a number of people in Virginia who spoke well of Crawford as I did in Boston. Helen Boardman furnished this information, with names and addresses to counsel—in fact in her desire to help the defense she handed over all her notes of her Virginia investigations, but Mr. Houston failed to see, with one exception, any of the people favorable to Crawford whose names she gave them.



"MR. HOUSTON SAYS HE WILL GET ME OUT IN TWO YEARS."

Facsimile reproduction from George Crawford's letter to a friend in Boston written on January 6, 1934 from Henrico jail. In the first part of this letter Crawford says: "I am not so well but thank God I am still living," declares he is innocent of the crime, and asks that some money, food and cigarettes be sent to him.

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HOWARD UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

FOUNDED BY GENERAL O. O. HOWARD

SCHOOL OF LAW
420 FIFTH STREET, N.W.

31 March 1934

Miss Helen Boardman,
140 Claremont Avenue,
New York City.

My dear Miss Boardman:

Answering your letter of March 25

1. We did not use the Boston alibi witnesses because we knew their stories could not help us. After Crawford's confession we personally contacted all the colored people he mentioned as having seen on his last trip into Virginia before the murder. They all verified his presence. Mr. Ransom and Mr. Tyson went to Boston to interview the alibi witnesses. None of them was able to place Crawford in Boston before February, 1932 when one actually pinned them down to dates. The reason I think they testified as they did at the extradition hearing was out of sentimental reaction that any Boston Negro would have against letting another Negro be returned to a Southern state on the charge of murdering a white woman. If we had subpoenaed them and got them to testify that Crawford was in Boston January 12-13, 1932, we would have been suborning perjury, for we would have known that their testimony did not represent the facts.

2. We checked up on every detail of the confession except to locate the articles stolen and found the lethal weapon. We checked on Crawford's movements, interviewed the police and subsequently obtained Crawford's clothing from the house where he had abandoned it when he fled from Washington. I still have the clothing in my possession.

3. I have already indicated that Ransom and Tyson checked up on the Boston witnesses by personal interviews in Boston.

Yours sincerely,

Charles H. Houston.
Charles H. Houston.

The N.A.A.C.P. lawyer explains why he didn't use Crawford's alibi witnesses. Note the statement that two lawyers went to Boston to interview the alibi witnesses. Compare with the affidavits of the witnesses, on the page opposite, that they talked with no lawyers after the extradition hearings.

questions in The Crisis in the future, thus precipitating a dispute which finally ended with Dr. Du Bois's resignation as editor.

Crawford, meanwhile was in the Henrico County Jail in Richmond awaiting trial on the second indictment, that of murdering Mrs. Buckner. There is some evidence that the state contemplated no further action against him. On February 10, 1934, however, The Norfolk (Virginia) Journal and Guide, a Negro weekly, carried a feature article purporting to be an interview with Crawford. In this he said that he was dissatisfied with his trial, that he could not understand why the alibi witnesses had not been called, that he had been "framed" and that he did not know "Charlie Johnson" and could not identify him (the reason for which his life had supposedly been spared at the first trial). He also stated that he would not of his own free will plead guilty to the Buckner indictment. Just two days later, Crawford was suddenly brought to Leesburg to plead to this indictment. It was on this occasion that, as stated above, Mr. Houston refused to make Crawford's plea, leaving him at this crucial moment without benefit of counsel and that Crawford —in terror of his life—recanted the interview, admitted knowing Charlie Johnson and pleaded guilty as he said in answer to a question from the judge "of his own free will."

According to The Loudoun Times-Mirror for February 15, 1934:

> Judge Alexander, Galleher and Houston were closeted in one of the jury rooms before sentence was passed and it was understood that the purported interview was discussed. Houston had previously made it clear that he regarded Crawford as an unreliable client and washed his hands of the case. Houston asked the court to state to Crawford that one of the conditions of the sentence was that he aid the state in running down Johnson.

Mr. Houston not only never denied or resented this story but gave substantially the same version of what took place in a letter to The Journal and Guide, which appeared in that paper for February 17, 1934. He also made some further statements that seemed to us interesting in view of the version of Crawford's confession given at the annual meeting by Walter White.

> As to the alibi [wrote Mr. Houston] we fully investigated this phase of the case. Messrs. Ransom and Tyson spent three days in Boston. It would have been impossible even to attempt an alibi without suborning perjury. The attorneys in Boston acted in good faith when they made the claim, but they did not have the information we possessed. . . . We checked and rechecked all the evidence in the case long before the trial and kept our mouths shut. We knew just about what the commonwealth would do, but they did not know what line we were going to take. We kept them thinking that we were going to put in an alibi right down to the point when they closed their case. We did this for a point, that they might not know how weak we were.

On March 31, he amplified this point somewhat impatiently in a letter to Helen Boardman who had written him to ask just how the alibi witnesses had been checked.

"Mr. Ransom and Mr. Tyson went to Boston to interview the alibi witnesses [he wrote in part in the letter reproduced herewith]. *None of them was able to place Crawford in Boston before February 1, 1932, when one actually pinned them down to dates.*" Helen Boardman, however, by that time had gone to Boston herself and seen the principal alibi witnesses who told her not only that they absolutely stood by their stories, told at the extradition hearing, but that nobody connected with the defense had been to see them or questioned them about the matter since that time. In April, 1934, I obtained from four of these witnesses, Deacon Anthony Bailey, Augustus Rogers, Ernest Lewis and Irving Washington, the affidavits to this effect reproduced photostatically herewith. The testimony of Irving Washington and Deacon Bailey was particularly impressive. Washington was a surprise witness at the hearing, unknown even to the defense lawyers and had testified that he and Crawford had slept together in the basement of Basil Hutchin's undertaking establishment for three weeks in January, 1932, beginning not later than January 9.

Helen Boardman and I then wrote an article based on these findings questioning the handling of the case for The Nation which submitted it to Mr. Houston for a reply. This article considerably expurgated and amended to some extent with our consent, appeared in The Nation for June 27, 1934, and Mr. Houston's reply in the issue of July 4. Further correspondence on the matter appeared also in the issues of July 18 and August 8, 1934. Mr. Houston, who stated that up to the time of receiving our article he had not taken our questions seriously, now also bestirred himself and submitted to us and to the editors of The Nation a mass of documents,

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including the complete transscript of the trial. We also had several interviews with him. From none of these, however, did any tenable explanation emerge for the failure of defense counsel to interview the alibi witnesses, nor for the statement that such interviews had taken place and that the witnesses could not sustain their original stories.

At our first interview Mr. Houston blamed this failure on his associates, Messrs. Ransom and Tyson, implying that they had misled him in the matter and that he would "get after them" about it. When we pointed out to him that their report stated explicitly just whom they had seen and failed to see and that his correspondence revealed that he had himself recalled them from Boston by telegram when he must have been fully aware that they had not seen most of the alibi witnesses, he abandoned this line of defense, admitting that this failure was perhaps unfortunate but insisting it did not really matter very much since he knew that Crawford was actually guilty.

As to the violation of Crawford's confidence he was equally evasive—denying that he himself had violated it except to Walter White. His alleged reason for doing this was the necessity of preventing White from publishing an article in The Crisis strongly implying that Paul Boeing was guilty. According to Mr. Houston's story Walter White had written such an article in good faith, and Mr. Houston had been compelled therefore to disclose to him that Crawford was guilty and had confessed. He could not recall whether or not he had cautioned White, a layman, that a defendant's statement to his lawyer is privileged and highly confidential, but implied that if the story had reached reporters and others the indiscretion was White's and not his. What the evidence against Boeing was which caused White late in the summer or early fall of 1933 to write such an article for publication Mr. Houston did not tell us.

Another interesting fact closely connected with this appeared in the first statement that Mr. Houston submitted to us and to The Nation's editors. In this he stated that he and his associates had also believed Boeing might be guilty at the outset of their investigation and had obtained permission to interview prosecution witnesses by stating to the Virginia authorities that they believed this and would accuse Boeing if their investigators confirmed it. In his Nation article of July 4, however, Mr. Houston for some reason wholly omitted to state this. His explanation, in this article, of his reasons for seeing prosecution witnesses rather than those for the defense was that "counsel had to investigate the evidence of the prosecution in order to develop their theory of the defense" I found and still find this discrepancy puzzling. Mr. Houston's first statement was written about five months after the trial ended, when he was in full possession of the facts and was evidently his considered and deliberate statement. If it was true five months after the trial that counsel saw prosecution witnesses in an attempt to investigate the possible guilt of Boeing, why was it no

I, Augustus Rogers, a redident of Boston, County of Suffolk, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, on oath, depose and say:

I met George Crawford in November 1931, at the Maryland Garage on Columbus avenue, Boston, Massachusetts. He was working for Mr. Hutchins, the undertaker. I came there to move radiators and Mr. Hutchins gave me Crawford as a helper. I did not know him by the name of Craeford but I knew him by the name of Smith. After I wasfinished he remained there working for Mr. Hutchins. In January, 1932, he came down to the shop at 108½ Tremont street, Boston, and he stayed at 108½ Tremont street from that time until he was arrested. I saw him there every day.

I testified to these facts at the extradition hearing and since that time I have not talked with any lawyers or anybody except Miss Helen Boardman who came to my house in February, 1934. I will testify at any place to the truth of this statement.

Augustus Rogers

I testified at the extradition hearing at City Hall, Boston, and since that time I have not talked with any lawyer, or any other person interested in George Crawford until I gave this statement to Miss Helen Boardman, February 25, 1934.

Irving Washington

November 28, 1933, was sent to me at the People's Baptist Church but did not receive it until several days later. I did not try to get into communication with Mr. Hailey. Miss Helen Boardman came to see me in February of this year and she is the only person to whom I have told any of the facts in the case.

Arthur Bailey 6666

I went to the extradition hearingaand afterwards was notified to come to Mr. Julian Hainey's office, and was interviewed by two lawyers from Washington, who had me get in touch with Mr. Augustus Rogers and Mr. Washington and have them meet the lawyers at the above address at 8:30. Mr. Washington and Mr. Rogers were present at that time but the lawyers have never showed up. I was later interviewed by Miss Helen Boardman on Sunday, the 25th of February of this year.

Ernest A Lewis

One affidavit in full, and the concluding sentences of three other affidavits, of alibi witnesses, stating that they had not been interviewed by the N.A.A.C.P. lawyers. Compare with Charles H. Houston's letter on page opposite.

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longer true or worth mentioning six months after the trial? It is still more difficult to understand why, if as Houston claimed at first, counsel were investigating Boeing's connection with the crime, so little appeared about him in their interviews with the prosecution witnesses while so much did about Crawford and his presence in Virginia. I can only recall two such interviews in which Paul Boeing played any part. One exceedingly important interview along these lines was between counsel and Roy Seaton, a former Middleburg justice of the peace who in his official character had been one of the first persons to investigate the scene of the crime. Seaton at the time of the interview, November 24, 1934, still was suspicious of Paul Boeing, believed Crawford might be innocent and was not only willing but anxious to testify for the defense. Mr. Houston and his associates, however, chose to consider Seaton unreliable, despite the fact that his testimony was substantially the same that he had given to Helen Boardman nearly a year before and they saw none of the other witnesses favorable to Crawford whose names Helen Boardman had given them. They also failed to see a number of Washington newspaper men, whose names Seaton had given them as those of witnesses who could corroborate a part of his story. Yet they were, believe it or not, counsel for the defense.

In his capacity as defense counsel, Mr. Houston also looked up Crawford's prison record in Richmond and found to his horror that it was even worse than he supposed and that Crawford had lied to his Boston attorneys, minimizing his offense and posing as a martyr. This at least is Mr. Houston's version of the matter. He failed, however, to verify the story that Crawford had been pardoned for saving Coleman's life. On the particular day he was in Richmond looking up Crawford's record—a Saturday afternoon—the particular office where this story could be checked was closed and he made no further attempt to do so. Mr. Houston, as defense counsel, also talked with a prosecution witness named Lester Hill—a Negro boy who up to this time had "refused to divulge his information to the prosecution." Mr. Houston cited him both in his Nation article and in conversation with us to refute our contention that many of the prosecution witnesses probably gave their testimony under duress. What he did not explain, however, was why, when there was not time enough to see defense witnesses, defense counsel saw not only witnesses who had assisted the prosecution but a prosecution witness who previously "refused to divulge his evidence." Was this in an attempt to find out something about Paul Boeing or to "build up the theory of defense?" A further interest attaches to the testimony of Hill in this case because after talking with Mr. Houston, either he or someone else *did* divulge his evidence to the prosecution and he suffered so complete a change of heart that he later testified for the prosecution at Crawford's trial.

On November 26, 1934, still in their capacity as defense counsel Mr. Houston and Mr. Tyson interviewed a certain Hammond Nokes, a rather disreputable colored man who had been passing as a woman and who lived near Middleburg. It was at the house of Nokes that Crawford was said by the prosecution to have spent a night shortly before the murder and the piece of a paper in Crawford's handwriting, allegedly found in Mrs. Ilsley's car, was said to bear Nokes' address. The report of Messrs. Houston and Tyson of this interview was as follows:

> In our interview with this Hammond person nothing very definitely established not even the fact that Crawford stayed there that night . . . but he led us to believe that he could not identify Crawford's picture "Because I wouldn't identify nobody I had only seen once in my life because you can make so many mistakes." . . .
>
> I think this house is a den for all the sissies, cutthroats and other depraved and degraded folks in the surrounding country. [At least five of the prosecution's witnesses frequented this house but their credibility was not challenged by the defense counsel. M. G.]. Bade us a very pleasant goodby—said you must come back sometime. Other than that was a complete bust as far as the interview was concerned.

This note I still find profoundly puzzling. Here were defense counsel, who by their own account started in believing in Crawford's Boston alibi, and not in the prosecution theory of Crawford's presence in Virginia. Yet when, for practically the first time, they came upon a prosecution witness who did not uphold this theory or did so in a dubious fashion, instead of throwing up their hats as one might expect, they call the interview "a perfect bust." Just what, one wonders, did they hope to obtain for Crawford? What was the real object of any of these interviews?

The Nokes' interview had particular importance because of the fact that the one damaging bit of evidence against Crawford besides the flimsy "confession" made to Galleher was the slip of paper bearing Nokes' address in Crawford's writing which the police claimed to have found in the abandoned car. I quote Mr. Houston's Nation article in this connection.

> It [the car] was taken to Washington and when it was searched a note indisputably written by George Crawford was found on the floor. Further evidence tended to establish that Crawford had written the note two days before the murder. Criticism has been made that the police did not find the note on the first search of the car, but what difference did that make if it was actually Crawford's note, written under the circumstances which counsel knew it had been written under? Counsel saved the force of their cross examination for the crucial things which would really affect the decision either in the trial court or on appeal, the unconstitutional exclusion of Negroes . . . the confession which was the missing link connecting Crawford with the case.

Houston Anxious to "Wind Up the Case"

Though reason totters, the truth is that the defense counsel here is asking why the prosecution should have to establish a vital point necessary to convict Crawford when it could perfectly rely on the sportsmanship of the defense to concede the point without any proof. This sportsmanship is the more remarkable when one remembers that the alleged "circumstances under which the note was written" by Crawford were known to defense counsel only as the result of the privileged and confidential relation between lawyer and defendant. If Mr. Houston is serious in asking, however, what difference it made when the note was found the answer is a very obvious one. In view of all the circumstances the reason it was not found on the first search of the car is very possibly that it had not, at that time, been planted there, in accordance with the determination shown by the authorities all along the line, to incriminate Crawford. Mr. Houston, however, preferred to waive the point and "save the force of his cross-examination for the crucial matters which would really affect the decision on appeal." This has an impressive sound—but after having done so he neglected to take the appeal. Why? Well, "In the first place Crawford did not want to appeal" and "as Crawford's counsel the writers of this article (Houston and Ransom) took their orders from him."

This too has a fine and impressive sound but we have, unfortunately, only the words of Messrs. Ransom and Houston that Crawford did not want to appeal, and Mr. Houston, after all, also said that the alibi witnesses had been seen when they hadn't and that they didn't stand by their stories when they did. Nor was the language used by Mr. Houston to Crawford at the time of the Buckner indictment that of a lawyer taking orders from his client—quite the contrary. We have no statement from Crawford on the point and see no chance of getting one, but even if Crawford did actually say at any time that he did not want to appeal, was this his constant or final judgment and did he really understand the implications and consequences of such a course and make his choice without fear or inducement? In view of the interview with The Journal and Guide, which even Mr. Houston believes Crawford actually gave, and of his repeated re-assertions of his innocence and repudiation of past confessions it seems highly improbable. As soon as the sentence was passed, Mr. Houston had announced in the open court that he would probably not appeal, and immediately after the trial he wrote to Galleher that the N.A.A.C.P. was anxious to wind up the case. It was some weeks after this that Crawford from Henrico jail wrote to a friend in Boston in a letter (reproduced herewith) that "I am an inser [innocent] man . . . and Mr. Houston, one of my lawyers, say he is going to get me out in two years."

Crawford is probably not wholly reliable either. It is true that after receiving his second sentence he apparently gave to The Loudoun Times-Mirror an interview in which he admitted his presence in Virginia and at the scene of the crime, though he still denied

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that he had taken any part in the murder.

In this interview Crawford said that the murders were committed with a piece of lead pipe. The prosecution had first sought to show at the trial that it was done with the blood-stained bootjack though the "confession" obtained by Galleher made it a piece of rock. The prosecution had in fact only one theory—that was its story and it stuck to it in the face of all discrepancies and absolute contradictions—that Crawford and "Charlie Johnson" were the guilty parties. Mr. Houston, who had "cracked down" on Crawford for the earlier interview in The Journal and Guide seems to have authorized this later one. Perhaps Crawford believed that giving it was part of the condition on which his life was spared. Certainly he was a badly shaken and frightened man on this occasion and the reporter to whom he gave the interview stated that he did so only after being assured that the severity of his punishment would not be increased. As Richard Hale said in reviewing the case in Boston last spring, "Crawford failed to appeal because he flinched under duress." It seems to me fair to add to this that this duress was applied among others by his counsel, Charles Houston. Certainly in Boston when Crawford was being properly defended and protected by Messrs. Wilson and Allen he was staunch in denying his guilt and resisted all the attempts of Galleher to browbeat him. The suggestion that the subsequent confessions that he has since made and repudiated again in Virginia were not made under duress or inducement of some kind is contrary to probability and common sense.

But there was still another reason, it seems, why counsel did not appeal. The Crawford defense was no mere legal case. They called it an "experiment in social statesmanship." There is perhaps no good reason why in these days when real-estate men are "realtors" and undertakers "morticians" defense lawyers should not be "experimenters in social statesmanship." But the realtor does still sell real estate, the mortician does enbalm and bury the dead. The difference between an ordinary defense lawyer and a "social statesman" is apparently that the former defends his client while the latter may desert and prosecute him with impunity.

The record shows that with such defense Crawford was convicted after a grossly unfair trial, although all the amenities were preserved and many compliments exchanged between the defense and the prosecution. He was convicted although the state could produce no eye witness to the crime, none who could even place Crawford in the immediate vicinity of the crime within several hours of it, no motive on his part (the contention that it was robbery holds no water), no fingerprints to connect Crawford with the crime, no blood-stained clothing, loot or murderous weapon found in his possession.

The temper of the community being what it was it seems highly probable that Crawford would have been convicted even if a far abler and more vigorous defense had been put up in his behalf. But if he had had a defense lawyer instead of a "social statesman" as his counsel the case could have been appealed and the standard of white justice prevailing in Leesburg, Va., would not have been hailed by the N.A.A.C.P.'s secretary as "one of the most distinguished victories for justice to the Negro on record." "Social statesmanship," however, seems to have become the policy of the national officers of the N.A.A.C.P. As a result Crawford is in jail, the actual murderer is still at large and Mr. Houston for his gallant services to the cause has just received an appointment as general counsel for the Association and director of the program of the joint committee, representing the American Fund for Public Service and the N.A.A.C.P.

This appointment should meet with the hearty approval of Mr. Houston's friends, especially the white southern judges and prosecuting attorneys among them. Colored people and their friends, however, might do well to challenge an appointment by which the national officers of the N.A.A.C.P., and the trustees of the Garland Fund have put the stamp of their approval on this policy of cowardly compromise and betrayal of Negro interests, apparently with a full knowledge of all the facts.

The responsibility for this policy lies not only at Houston's door; it lies at the door of the old guard among the N.A.A.C.P.'s national officers and their rubber stamps, in particular Joel E. Spingarn, the chairman of the board, Arthur Spingarn, head of the National Legal Committee, and Mary White Ovington. All three were connected with the N.A.A.C.P. in the early days when it was a militant and useful organization. They deserve credit for the work it accomplished in those days, but they must also bear the responsibility for the organization's present degradation and weakness.

Moscow Street

CHARLES B. STRAUSS

Moscow street is by day a river running over with workers:
The lithe men and squat women of all ages
Walk full on their feet with the poise of a river:
You perhaps remember hastening on shrill wires down
Chicago street,
You and the thin workers streaking before the wind like sand
Because surely there were not hours enough that day,
Because it was sure that nothing was sure and you were afraid
But very, very busy:

Remember or not, you and your millions bear this feeling
Sharp and irresolute down in your bones, and take it along
As you take your hands along wherever you go: and yet
You will lose it here:

But do not mistake me:
Steel screeches here as in Pittsburgh; the motorist in brocade
skullcap
Punches his horn savagely, sends a Red Army boy hopping
backward;
Paint falls from scaffolding: there is technique and action:
and yet

The workers here spill onward at their own sweet rate and
Their rhythm is confident and the tune of their feet
temperate:
Daily out in the street the river of them moves abreast to
lathes,

To shops and furrows, each unit lifting a red flag like a sail:
Also the poised river flows two ways around an island of
street repairs
Where muscles already move well,
Shovels slamming the soil to finish the job by nightfall:

Here on the bank in the upthrown dirt two workers sit
singing
They reach out with both hands to grab a red-kerchiefed girl
whose pick
Shines and breaks earth: she swings around, crying out
Her amazement and willingness and repose:

Music of shovels and laughter moves down your river
And you perhaps do not remember this from anywhere at all,
Not anywhere else at all.

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The Auto Workers Face 1935

The Detroit N.R.A. Hearings

A. B. MAGIL

DETROIT.

APPROPRIATELY enough, it all took place on a stage. The chief actors emerged from the wings; they were: Leon Henderson, director of research and planning of the N.R.A., Richard H. Lansburgh, associate director, and a stenographer. A little later in the performance there came on the scene Dr. Isadore Lubin, Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor.

The occasion was the N.R.A. hearings on "regularizing employment and otherwise improving the conditions of labor in the automobile industry," held in Detroit Dec. 15 and 16. The show had been gotten up at the suggestion of President Roosevelt who, in an expansive mood, pondering the problems of the world at Warm Springs, Ga., suggested on Nov. 21 to S. Clay Williams, chairman of the National Industrial Recovery Board, that "a study should be made by a group of impartial public officials" and that "an opportunity should be given to representatives of the various economic interests involved, including labor, management and consumers, to present orally, or in writing, their opinions and any supporting factual data."

When the N.R.A. got around to staging the show, they added something that Mr. Roosevelt had thoughtlessly forgotten to mention in his letter:

"No presentations will be received relating to Section 7A of the N.I.R.A. and similar matters for which special boards and agencies are serving."

Before he had written the letter to S. Clay Williams, even before he had extended (Nov. 1) the Automobile Code for another three months, Mr. Roosevelt, according to the press, had had the benefit of private conferences with Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., president of General Motors, and Walter P. Chrysler, generalissimo of Chrysler Corp.—but even Homer occasionally nods. The wide-awake N.R.A. corrected Mr. Roosevelt's error. Section 7A—collective bargaining—the right to organize—that holy of holies of the early days of the New Deal crusade—was barred from the hearings.

But it crashed the gate nevertheless.

Section 7A proved to be the ghost at the banquet table. The master of ceremonies, Mr. Henderson, a dark, stoutish, irritable gentleman, who wears his thimbleful of authority like a cocked hat, threw Section 7A out on its ear several times, only to find it parked in his lap again, filling the whole of the plush-and-gilt auditorium in Masonic Temple where the hearings were held.

The only organization that protested the exclusion of material relating to Section 7A was the Communist Party, which presented a statement through its representative, Earl Reno. The Communist Party and the Auto Workers' Union (affiliated with the Trade Union Unity League) were the only organizations that called for united action of all the legitimate unions in the industry to combat the employers' offensive.

The story of the automobile industry, not as it has been ballyhooed through the world by the traveling salesmen of American capitalism, but as it has been written in the misery, the broken lives, the disappointed hopes of tens of thousands of working men and women, was told at the N.R.A. auto hearings. That story constitutes one of the most eloquent indictments of a system that has built up pyramids of super-wealth and power on the labor of industrial slaves; and it strips the mask from a New Deal that has strengthened the company unions, increased speedup, cut wages, thrown families out of homes in an industry that was trumpeted to the four corners of the earth as the symbol of "the American standard of living."

Out of the wide variety of testimony offered by members of different and in some cases, competing unions, a number of facts emerge clearly:

1. A tremendous drop in the annual earnings of all automobile workers, skilled and unskilled, since 1929 resulting from both wage cuts and widespread unemployment, the decline in some cases being as much as 75 percent.

2. Great intensification of the speedup during this period, the production rate on some operations increased as much as 300 percent. As a result of this, elimination of workers, especially those over forty, and increase in accidents.

3. Reduction of tens of thousands of workers and their families to dependence on meager relief which provides a below-subsistence-level standard of living.

4. Loss of homes and other property by workers who had paid thousands of dollars on them in the boom days.

5. Increased use of industrial spies, blacklists and other terror methods to prevent organization.

6. Flagrant violation of the maximum hours' provisions in the codes by practically all companies.

7. Swindling of the underpaid workers through crooked bonus systems and insurance rackets controlled entirely by the companies.

8. Complete failure of the President's settlement of March 25 to improve conditions; on the contrary, the testimony showed that a number of companies began to cut wages immediately after the signing of this agreement which was supposed to chart "a new course in social engineering."

9. *New wage cuts are now being introduced with the rehiring of men after the seasonal layoffs.*

One might add what was, of course, barred from the hearings: the increased pressure exerted by the companies, aided and abetted by the Roosevelt-appointed Automobile Labor Board, to drive the workers into the company unions.

The testimony itself:

The men spoke, rank and file workers and officials of local unions, who risked jobs and the possibility of future jobs in order to testify. They talked quietly, seriously, presenting facts from personal experience. Very few could be classed as radicals, yet practically every word corroborated to the full the analysis and predictions made by militant labor organizations; every word showed that all their grievances were inseparably bound up with the crucial question which the government and the employers were at such pains to keep out: the question of the right to organize. And every word cried aloud that unless the workers, regardless of union affiliation, stand united in militant struggle, they will inevitably be ground down to even more slavish conditions by the millionaire auto magnates and their political servants.

In striking contrast to the testimony of the *members* of the United Automobile Workers, affiliated to the American Federation of Labor, were the speeches of Charlton Ogburn, counsel for the A. F. of L., and Francis J. Dillon, A. F. of L. national organizer in the auto industry.

Mr. Ogburn is an aristocratic-looking gentleman whose speaking is a cross between a Harvard accent and an East Side brogue. His manner at the hearing was deferential to the point of almost complete ineffectuality. He sprinkled aromatic praise over President Roosevelt, the N.R.A. division of research and planning and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and declared that "the scope of the inquiry meets with our approval."[1] He reiterated the well-known gospel:

> The American Federation of Labor believes in the American system. It believes that labor and industry are partners in the production of manufactured goods, in the production of articles for commerce and agriculture. It does not believe in

[1] All quotations are from the official and stenographic hearings just issued in two volumes by the National Industrial Recovery Administration. I have corrected occasional obvious errors in transcription.—A. B. M.

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the nationalization of industry. and the solution that we hope to bring before this board, if we are permitted to do so, will be a solution based upon that premise, the premise of the partnership of labor and capital.

Perhaps it is lucky for Mr. Ogburn that he made his little speech before the A. F. of L. workers testified; otherwise some unruly members of the audience might not have been able to restrain their titters. The testimony of these workers certainly confirmed the A. F. of L. premise: the partnership between labor and capital in the auto industry is, as Matthew Smith, general secretary of the Mechanics Educational Society of America, described it, "the relationship of a slave owner to a slave," or, in the words of Phil Raymond, national secretary of the Auto Workers' Union, "the partnership of a holdup man and his victim."

The Auto Workers Testify

Francis J. Dillon, who followed Ogburn, is a beefy gent of the well-known type. Before he succeeded William Collins as national organizer in the auto industry, he was stationed in the General Motors principality of Flint, Mich., where he was not distinguished for his devotion to the interests of the workers. On taking over his new duties, he showed his energy by issuing a statement announcing a campaign not against the employers, but against Communists.

Dillon read a prepared statement, which echoed Ogburn's "partnership" plea. In presenting his concrete proposals, he began to mention the Auto Code's "merit clause," but was summarily stopped by Chairman Henderson, who ruled it out. The A. F. of L. demands included (1) minimum hourly rates of 60 cents for common labor and 70 cents for production workers; (2) a 30-hour week —no mention of increased pay to compensate for the shorter hours; (3) elimination of the group bonus and piece-work systems; (4) time studies (determination of production speed) to be made "by joint agreement between employer and employes," and (5) "unemployment insurance to be charged as part of the operating cost of the industry and to be under the joint management of employer and employe." It is clear that the A.F. of L. leaders intend a form of unemployment insurance whose cost, instead of being borne by the employers and the government, will be passed on to the consumer.

Outstanding during the first day of the hearings was the testimony of William McKie, unemployed Ford worker. This tall, lanky, gray-haired Scotchman, a tinsmith by trade, held the platform for nearly an hour. He really gave a history of the Ford worker since 1926.

I quote from his testimony on the question of speedup:

> In 1926, in the motor building . . . five men turned out 300 jigs for crankshafts. Two of these men were laid off in 1927, late in 1927; and the three men left were speeded up until March, 1928, the three men turned out 500 jigs.
>
> The speedup in the soldering department and gas tanks: in 1926 one man turned out thirty-five pieces; in 1927 one man turned out eighty pieces.
>
> In the piston department, in 1927, thirty men were turning out as much as what sixty to sixty-five men used to do.

McKie was here describing the increase in speedup that came with the introduction of Model A. Concerning the speedup at the present time he stated:

> The speed on the final assembly line was so terrific that the men could not cope with the production in eight hours. These men went in sometimes a half an hour or three-quarters of an hour before the starting time and had all of the material laid out that they wanted to work with and everything ready to go, and it took them about the same time at night time to get the stuff away. . . . These men actually put in one hour each day for the Ford Motor Company for nothing. . . .
>
> It is estimated, and I have checked this up myself, between 1933 to 1934 the speed of the conveyors has been increased from the rate of two miles per hours to three miles per hour. In some instances the conveyor runs from four to five miles an hour. I can take you to the motor building where this conveyor is running as quick as an average man can walk. . . .

From McKie, on the subject of wages:

> In 1929 the wage rates ran $6 to $10 a day. The yearly income was—I am giving as an approximate average $1,470. Many skilled workers' yearly income ran $2,340. Everybody knows that this particular period of 1929 was what we look back upon as a period of prosperity. Houses were built, the instalment man was busy on the job, we were all buying radios, we were all buying cars, because Mr. Hoover said that the period was near that every man would have two cars in his garage and a chicken in every pot. Something like that. (Laughter.)
>
> In 1930 wages were cut to $5 to $6 a day. Many took a 15 percent cut. The irregular employment begins, and a further speedup.
>
> In 1932 it was the period of depression. The Ford plant was practically shut down from about the middle of 1932. I do not think that there were more—for instance, in my particular department where we had 300 tinsmiths, I do not think that there were more than thirty men left out of our department. . . . Thousands and thousands of workers were absolutely poverty-stricken. The general thought was given that these Ford workers would be able to tide over this particular difficulty because they had been having a pretty good period during 1929, but most of these men had attempted to invest their earnings in the buying of lots and homes and all kinds of appliances to help their wives at home, such as washing machines and things of this description, and when this period arrived, of course we know now that these Ford workers had no money to tide them over.
>
> As to 1934—early in 1934 the Ford Motor Company announced a 10-percent wage increase. The workers did not get this wage increase, many of them, for months afterwards. There were stoppages—I can vouch for one particular instance myself. . . .
>
> In March again of the same year, the Ford Motor Company announced another increase. Some of them, when they started in 1934, had been getting $4 a day, the majority of production workers, some $4.20 and some $4.50. But in March, 1934, Ford announced an increase to $5 a day. A few workers got this increase three weeks after the newspaper announcement. The majority did not get the increase until about the middle of July. All of the wage increases were accompanied by a commensurate stepping up of production demanded of every workman. . . .
>
> *The average yearly income of production workers at the Ford plant is less than the average of the automobile industry as a whole. . . .*

Concerning the notorious Ford spy system:

> The period of employment is on the average six months a year. The average yearly income of the great mass of the workers in the Ford plant is $650 a year, or $54.17 a month.
>
> Threats and intimidation is one of the worst possible things, even at that particular time, and has been developed to a mueh greater extent at the present time. The service man [company spy], for instance—the question of the workers speaking to each other. You would think in the ordinary course of human dealings that at least a worker would be entitled to talk to any other worker during his lunch hour, during his own time, or speak to a worker going across the bridge going home, in the busses, or in the street cars, or at such times and places, but that is not so. You will very rarely find a Ford worker, unless you have his confidence, speaking to you exactly about what is going on in the Ford plant.

McKie told of other abuses: the health hazards, the "alarming increase in the number and the severity of accidents" as a result of speedup, the Ford $1 a day forced labor scheme which was especially developed among the unemployed workers in Inkster and Garden City, near Detroit. It was a picture of industrial peonage that makes the serfdom of feudal times seem mild in comparison.

Conditions in other plants are no better, the hearings revealed.

From the testimony of J. G. Kennedy, Chrysler worker:

> I worked on that automobile line from November, 1930 to September, 1931. . . . I lost two hours in that time through my own fault—and my earnings for that period, and the insurance was deducted from my earnings, were less than $10 per week.
>
> You may wonder how I provided for my wife and family during that time. I mortgaged my insurance, and finally lost it, and lost everything else that I had along with it, due to the fact that I was not able to earn sufficient for to keep up my payments for rents and provide for my family. . . .
>
> We started in producing about fifteen cars per hour, and when we got up to the peak of production, with the same crew we were producing twenty-five cars an hour, and when we increased the number of employes by about one to ten, it was speeded up to thirty-seven cars per hour. . . .
>
> You went in there, starting to work 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning; then you had to work through until 11:30 regardless of your physical condition, in the majority of the cases without any relief for hygienic purposes. You went back after a half or three-quarters of an hour's rest and you worked through until quitting time, whether that was 2:30, 3:30, 5:30 or 8:30 and you got no relief again.
>
> . . . You were told by the foreman that you either had to keep up your end of the work

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or if you did not, there were hundreds of men out at the gate willing to take your place. That threat was held over your head several times a day, and to show you that the work was almost unbearable for the average man . . . there was not an average of two men out of fifty on that line that were forty years of age. There was not an average of ten men out of fifty on the line that were thirty-five years of age, and the majority of them were between twenty and thirty years of age.

Now, then, you probably wonder if that condition exists on that assembly line, why our people are not more interested in being down here this afternoon to testify and why they do not put up a more bitter fight against the company. I want to say to you, gentlemen, *that that is fear. Those men have been discriminated against and fired as I have myself.* I was eliminated and prohibited from producing or earning a living for my wife and family because I exercised my right as a citizen and advocated that we start an organization in the Chrysler plant to better conditions for myself and my fellow men, but I was fired for that effort, as were many more of my fellow-workers in the plant, and when we brought it before—with all due respect— to the President, establishing for us an automobile board, that in my opinion—

Chairman Henderson here interrupted to rule that "that is not pertinent to this inquiry."

A number of workers testified concerning the cheating bonus system. This system has become such a sore spot in the industry that most of the companies, in an effort to placate the men, are now doing away with it and establishing flat day-rates. But it seems to be another case of Greeks bearing gifts.

"When they took in and established the flat rate," testified Harold Paget, Dodge worker, "what they did was to figure out their costs, a certain number of men—and they arrived at an average flat rate. *In all the instances that I have been able to check up, the men have suffered to the extent of a 10 per-cent cut.*"

One of the best and most colorful witnesses was Charles Madden, employe of the Pontiac Motor Company (General Motors subsidiary). A worker in the industry for 28 years, with eleven dependents, his earnings for two years had been $360.

CHAIRMAN HENDERSON: Let me understand that; $360 for a year for each of the two past years?

MR. MADDEN: *Three hundred and sixty dollars for the entire two years. The reason of course for that I cannot give because it is debarred from the hearing.* (Laughter.) . . . I would like to point out, that young men are not particularly interested in entering employment under the present conditions of the industry *because there is maintained a penal system in the shops, a system in which men of spirit, men who would be expected to have spirit, and those are more particularly the young, practically have to hang their citizenship and their manhood and their self-respect on the gate when they go into these places of employment.* (Applause.)

They are treated with about the amount of courtesy and consideration that they could find or perhaps less than they could find in the penal institutions. I am pointing this out as one of the effects on the workers, the young men. I know that these layoffs have forced them into bootlegging, manufacturing of illicit alcohol, burglary, robbery and other means, legal or otherwise, by which they could raise the necessary money to meet the requirements of youth, amusement and the things like that of life to which they are fully entitled.

On the older man the effect has been different. The effect that I have found, I have found it to be in my own case, a deterioration physically. A deterioration which is accelerated each year, and accelerated particularly by the worry attached to the layoff itself, to the fact that one is laid off, to the fact that one cannot supply their families with the necessary things. All these things tend to tear a man down, and of course make him less able to perform. What he will find when he returns to the shops is an increased speedup in the job he formerly occupied or held.

This is what Dr. I. W. Ruskin, Detroit physician, who was the last witness to testify, called "speedup, depression, unemployment, traumatic and insecurity neurosis."

Elvie Kramer, worker at the Buick plant (General Motors) in Flint, testified that wages had been cut as much as 22 percent and that the men in his department had to work through the entire day without time off for lunch. From $1,800 in 1929 this worker's earnings had dropped to $487 in 1932. Edward Mahlburg, worker at the Cadillac plant (General Motors), said he averaged $500 a year during the past three years. Testimony was also given concerning wage cuts now being introduced in other plants.

The high point of the second day's sessions was indubitably the testimony of Maurice Sugar, who is one of the truly distinguished labor attorneys in the country. Now a candidate for judge of Recorder's Court with the endorsement of the Detroit Federation of Labor, the Mechanics Educational Society of America and left-wing organizations, Sugar took the offensive from the start. Before he was through he had ripped to tatters the sacred bans and taboos of the N.R.A. committee and had introduced evidence that every effort on the part of the workers to organize was met with the most ruthless persecution by the companies.

He charged, moreover, that the companies were using the very hearings conducted under the auspices of the N.R.A. to photograph witnesses. "The Ford Motor Company," he said, "has taken moving pictures of demonstrations of workers in the city of Detroit, developed the films, run them through and looked for the faces of their employes, and upon finding them, discharged them." After the gunfire attack on the Ford hunger marchers in March, 1932, Sugar stated, Ford workers "were discharged for taking up a collection to pay funeral expenses of the men that were killed."

Sugar dealt with the government- and company-inspired ballyhoo about "stabilizing employment" and "a guaranteed annual wage."

"Regularizing employment, as conceived by the employer and his political reflections, means spreading the misery some more. Not raising the standard of living of the worker, oh no. Find a method of allaying the rising discontent by giving him a piece of bread where he did not have a piece of bread before, but just a piece of bread—and the proposal for a guaranteed wage may readily become, and I am inclined to believe will become, a fraud and a delusion, a means of further lowering the standard of living of the worker unless that proposal is supplemented by a real program of unemployment insurance. (Applause.) . . .

"There must be established a wage which is not a subsistence wage. This is a recommendation. But it must be a wage which gives the American worker a living plus all of the comforts of life. (Applause.) And he is entitled to all of that, because all of the comforts of life come through his efforts. . . .

"If a proper standard of living for the American worker means no dividends to automobile stockholders, I say, no dividends to automobile stockholders. If a decent standard of living to the American worker means no high-salaried executives, no salaries at all, I say let it be so. One factor must be considered as constant at the outset, and that is that every American worker is entitled to a decent standard of living. That must never be changed." (Applause.)

Sugar was followed by a number of M.E.S.A. members whose testimony, though they are supposedly the "aristocrats" of the industry, revealed conditions in no wise different from those prevailing among the A.F. of L. production workers. This testimony fully corroborated the statement of Matthew Smith, general secretary of the organization, that for the past five years these highly skilled workers have averaged from $300 to $700 a year, while their working hours, when employed have been eleven and twelve hours a day, seven days a week—codes or no codes. The speech of Smith, who is a member of the Socialist Party, echoed the militant sentiments of the M.E.S.A. rank and file. It was he, however, who last year peddled all sorts of illusions about the N.R.A. and opposed militant policies, who himself served on the strike-breaking regional labor board, who when the auto workers were ready to go out in a general strike last March, wired the National Labor Board that such a strike would be "a national calamity and a severe handicap to the President's recovery program."

What was the political significance of the N.R.A. hearings?

In concluding his testimony, Maurice Sugar declared that "this hearing, with the exclusion of that matter (relating to Section 7A), is puerile, childish, and it must be sterile and non-productive; it results in suppression, and it really is merely staging a show for some purpose other than the remedying of evils that concern labor generally."

What was this "other purpose"? Why was the show staged? What is the outlook for the automobile industry in 1935? In another article A. B. Magil will attempt to answer these questions.—THE EDITORS.

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Limbach

Man on a Road

ALBERT MALTZ

AT ABOUT four in the afternoon I crossed the bridge at Gauley, West Virginia, and turned the sharp curve leading into the tunnel under the railroad bridge. I had been over this road once before and knew what to expect—by the time I entered the tunnel I had my car down to about ten miles an hour. But even at that speed I came closer to running a man down than I ever have before. This is how it happened.

The patched, macadam road had been soaked through by an all-day rain and now it was as slick as ice. In addition, it was quite dark—a black sky and a steady, swishing rain made driving impossible without headlights. As I entered the tunnel a big cream colored truck swung fast around the curve on the other side. The curve was so sharp that his headlights had given me no warning. The tunnel was short and narrow, just about passing space for two cars, and before I knew it he was in front of me with his big, front wheels over on my side of the road.

I jammed on my brakes. Even at ten miles an hour my car skidded, first toward the truck and then, as I wrenched on the wheel, in toward the wall. There it stalled. The truck swung around hard, scraped my fender and passed through the tunnel about an inch away from me. I could see the tense face of the young driver with the tight bulge of tobacco in his cheek and his eyes glued on the road. I remember saying to myself that I hoped he'd swallow that tobacco and go choke himself.

I started my car and shifted into first. It was then I saw for the first time that a man was standing in front of my car about a foot away from the inside wheel. It was a shock to see him there. "For Chrissakes," I said.

My first thought was that he had walked into the tunnel after my car had stalled. I was certain he hadn't been in there before. Then I noticed that he was standing profile to me with his hand held up in the hitchhiker's gesture. If he had walked into that tunnel, he'd be facing me—he wouldn't be standing sideways looking at the opposite wall. Obviously I had just missed knocking him down and obviously he didn't know it. He didn't even know I was there.

It made me run weak inside. I had a picture of a man lying crushed under a wheel with me standing over him knowing it was my car.

I called out to him "Hey!" He didn't answer me. I called louder. He didn't even turn his head. He stood there, fixed, his hand up in the air, his thumb jutting out. It scared me. It was like a story by Bierce where the ghost of a man pops out of the air to take up his lonely post on a dark country road.

My horn is a good, loud, raucous one and I knew that the tunnel would re-double the sound. I slapped my hand down on that little black button and pressed as hard as I could. That man was either going to jump or else prove that he was a ghost.

Well, he wasn't a ghost—but he didn't jump, either. And it wasn't because he was deaf. He heard that horn all right.

He was like a man in a deep sleep. The horn seemed to awaken him only by degrees, as though his whole consciousness had been sunk in some deep recess within himself. He turned his head slowly and looked at me. He was a big man, about thirty-five with a heavy-featured face—an ordinary face with a big, fleshy nose and a large mouth. The face didn't say much. I wouldn't have called it kind or brutal or intelligent or stupid. It was just the face of a big man, wet with rain, looking at me with eyes that seemed to have a glaze over them. Except for the eyes you see faces like that going into the pit at six in the morning or coming out of a steel mill or foundry where heavy work is done. I couldn't understand that glazed quality in his eyes. It wasn't the glassy stare of a drunken man or the wild, mad glare I saw once in the eyes of a woman in a fit of violence. I could only think of a man I once knew who had died of cancer. Over his eyes in the last days there was the same dull glaze, a far away, absent look as though behind the blank, outward film there was a secret flow of past events on which his mind was focussed. It was this same look that I saw in the man on the road.

When at last he heard my horn, the man stepped very deliberately around the front of my car and came toward the inside door. The

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Correspondence

Oakley Johnson Comments

To The New Masses:

I ask space to comment on Granville Hicks' statements concerning The Monthly Review in his "Our Magazine and Their Functions" (Dec. 18).

1. "The purpose of this magazine," says Hicks, "was to reach sections of the middle-class that are not ready for The New Masses." Those who have read the preliminary announcements and the five (not four) issues that have appeared will agree that this statement of purpose is inadequate. Its purposes were specifically to present to unpoliticalized middle class people detailed and concrete data on the economic status of white collar and professional workers (see "The Dentist Faces the Depression," "Lebanon Hospital Workers Organize," "The Shields Case"—for teachers—"A Case for the Musician," etc.); to give detailed correct explanations of certain political questions which disturb many middle class sympathizers (see, for example, my own article on the Madison Square Garden affair of last February); to help win the middle class for the fight against Fascism (see articles by Herbert A. Klein, Isidor Schneider, Simon L. Shuster, etc.); and, incidentally, by editorial comment, to help popularize the revolutionary magazines that have a direct middle-class appeal, especially The New Masses, New Theatre, and Soviet Russia Today—and China Today, another "new" magazine. I believe that the detailed treatment called for by the first three aims can best be given in a monthly periodical, leaving current weekly comment and generally shorter articles to The New Masses.

2. Hicks declares that "a few" articles "might" have had the right appeal, but that "they could hardly offset the effect of the rest of the contents," and continues: "Certain articles were of a highly technical and perhaps even sectarian nature, and could have only the most limited appeal. Others were on an *exceedingly low intellectual and literary level,* and served only to bring the revolutionary movement into disrepute." (My emphasis.) Since Hicks declares that he "should like to be quite specific," even at the "risk of stepping on a number of corns," it is unfortunate that he saw fit to make these sweeping assertions without a single specific reference. I would be the first to point out and condemn our mistakes on The Monthly Review, but I ask those interested to judge by the magazine itself whether the quoted statements are not on an exceedingly low level of comradely criticism.

3. Hicks concludes with the statement, applicable both to the Partisan Review and The Monthly Review, that "such Bohemian individualism and irresponsibility are entirely incompatible with the serious tasks of revolutionaries." I cannot discuss this charge, but I must state, both on behalf of the magazine and of my own participation as its associate editor, that no revolutionist should make so irresponsible a stateemnt. Concerning this final statement I shall expect a comradely retraction from the editors of New Masses.

The Monthly Review hoped to keep going for one year. It was financed entirely by its founder and editor, Joseph Koven, but the heavy expense and inadequate sales forced its untimely suspension.

Oakley Johnson.

Granville Hicks Replies

To The New Masses:

My article on "Our Magazines and Their Functions" was intended, as I tried to make clear, to initiate discussion on the whole problem of the economical utilization of our resources. I was naturally aware that Oakley Johnson must believe the Monthly Review served a useful function, for otherwise he would not have remained an editor of it. I am very glad to have him present evidence in defense of his position, and I have no comment to make on his first paragraph.

His second paragraph, however, asks me to substantiate my statement that certain contributions to the Monthly Review were on a low intellectual and literary level. I was referring to the contributions of Joseph Koven. I do not have copies of the Monthly Review at hand as I write this, and therefore I cannot name particular articles. I can, however, say that the greater number of Koven's contributions were juvenile in conception, and inept and even offensive in expression.

Finally, if Oakley Johnson will re-read the last paragraph of my article, he will see that I did not impute "Bohemian individualism and irresponsibility" to the editors of either the Monthly Review or the Partisan Review. It is a charge that I should never think of making. I have the greatest respect for almost everyone connected with either magazine: In fact, it is because I recognize the ability of these men that I think the whole question of the magazines ought to be raised.

Granville Hicks.

Cinema Guild of Detroit

To The New Masses:

The decline of the Little Cinema Theatre movement since 1929 has made it all but impossible in recent years for significant contributions to the art of the cinema to be seen and heard in America.

Like the audience-groups in France and England and the few in America, the Cinema Guild of Detroit, newly organized, is setting out to create a membership movie-group that will show the many fine European and independent productions usually not shown because they do not tally with the traditional "box-office" standards or because they do not check with the political, social and cultural status quo. We expect to aid the production of experimental and independent movies.

We invite readers of The New Masses in Detroit who are interested to communicate with us at 127 W. Adams St., Detroit.

Cinema Guild of Detroit,
Henry Schuman.

New Theatre of Philadelphia

To The New Masses:

The New Theatre of Philadelphia, a collective organization of playwrights, directors, actors, stage technicians and musicians, has recently been launched, with an enrollment already of some 165 members. It is a cooperative, non-profit making organization with the guiding principle, "the social education of our people."

The New Theatre will endeavor to bring to the broad masses of the people, social plays, vigorously and truthfully concerned with the historic struggles surrounding contemporary life; and to form a permanent theatre, with a continuing repertory, its own workshop and offering plays at low admission rates.

The New Theatre prefers whenever possible to produce the work of as yet unknown American dramatists whose work is nevertheless honest, significant and concerned with the struggles of our day. Such dramatists who believe their manuscripts fall into the repertory of such a theatre are asked to send them to the New Theatre, 2313 Walnut Street, Philadelphia.

Frieda Nurenberg,
for New Theatre.

War Challenge of N.R.A.

To The New Masses:

Happy Days, the official publication of the C.C.C. camps makes this editorial statement: "Every one knows the value of military training, and who, recipient of Army discipline, should appreciate it more than the average C.C.C. member. An inability to secure employment conduces to an unruliness, a feeling of unrest, which, prevalent among the majority, gradually pervades the entire company. No training can possibly be of more advantage to the reforestation men than military training."

But the editors of Happy Days are much too clever to propose anything more than making the camps permanent. For the present they are leaving the dirty work to The New York Daily News which demands that C.C.C. men be given guns and to the Assistant Secretary of War. As far back as last January Woodring revealed the manner in which the camps are linked up with the war preperations of the N.R.A. machine. He wrote in Liberty magazine:

> In two months last spring the Army recruited, mobilized, conditioned and equipped more men than we recruited in the Spanish-American War and we did it so quietly and efficiently that few people in the country realized what was happening. This achievement, the organization of over 300,000 men in more than 1,500 C.C.C. camps, was the first real test of the Army's plans for war mobilization.

The Youth Section of the American League Against War and Fascism has taken up the challenge of the N.R.A. war machine, and is now conducting a campaign against the C.C.C. camps. Petitions are being circulated demanding that the 8,000 Army officers who control the camps be withdrawn, that the federal government refrain from making the camps permanent institutions and that regular jobs or unemployment insurance be substituted in their place. Only immediate action on a national scale can save the camps from being turned into garrisons. It is expected that over 100,000 signatures will be collected to back up these demands.

Lon Lawson.

A Correction

To The New Masses:

In our ad of last week an error occurred. The regular price of the twenty-five-booklet, 1,725-page Little Lenin Library that we offer for $3.25 during the month of January was incorrectly listed as $4.00 instead of $4.90. The purchaser saves $1.65 on this library and not 75 cents as the ad implies. All those who wish to take advantage of this offer should order immediately and include 25 cents extra for postage if they live outside of New York City and 15 cents if in the city.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Material for a Note on Shakespeare

WHEN a new Shakespeare production comes to Broadway it usually gives bourgeois critics an excuse for unburdening themselves of a certain amount of erudition about the poet's struggles, personality, love-life, etc. But, as everyone knows, most of such commentary never goes beyond the hypothetical, being essentially repetitious of the available Shakespeare facts, which continue to be few. The most fruitful recent research has illuminated Shakespeare's contemporaries rather than himself (for example, Leslie Hotson's detective work on the killing of Christopher Marlowe). Nevertheless, faced with the perennial problem of "introducing" the new Shakespeare production, the bourgeois critic chooses the simplest means and revamps essentially the same material that had filled his columns when Shakespeare last came to town, (for example, Brooks Atkinson's recent "Preface to 'Romeo'," introducing Katharine Cornell's fresh and brilliant *Romeo and Juliet*.)

For the Marxist critic, however, a new performance of Shakespeare raises a series of questions which American criticism has so far failed to analyze, and which the ideological enemies of Marxism take keen pleasure in complicating. With venom and rapt intellectual confusion, they insist that all sorts of nonsensical "conclusions" must logically follow from certain false premises which they generously attribute to revolutionary criticism. For example, Shakespeare must be entirely damned or 95 percent discredited (1) because he was a bourgeois, (2) because he idolized the nobility and mocked the servile classes, and (3) because he made frequent statements predicating belief in supernaturalism. A full answer to these three chief "questions" alone would require a lengthy essay. For our purposes it is sufficient to adduce some of the facts involved in a revolutionary understanding of Shakespeare, thereby to wash away the falsifications which opponents of Marxist criticism have contributed to the question.

At the risk of restating the obvious, let it be recorded at once that any work of art which provides a faithful picture of a given period in history is of inestimable value and importance, for reasons of cultural documentation if for nothing else. To Marxist criticism, which is scrupulous to understand every last atom of history, denying nothing as unimportant if it helps to explain a period in the career of mankind, the plays of Shakespeare assume consummate importance for their unparalleled reflection of their period. But just how faithful and typical are these plays? How representative an Elizabethan was Shakespeare?

Born in the last third of the sixteenth century and fed by the dwindling but persistent stream of medieval culture, Shakespeare lived and worked through some of the most significant years in England's development. British explorers were laying the basis for far-flung imperialism, loading the treasuries of individual merchants and the crown with wealth filched from new colonies. In trafficking her goods from country to country, England's fleet was speedily establishing British commerce as the richest and her warships as the strongest. The island teemed with military power and economic success. Meanwhile Henry Eighth's clash with the Pope opened the way for intellectual growth; it was the initial emancipation from the deadening mental influence of Catholicism. And despite the unsettled years (1547-58) following Henry's death, Queen Elizabeth had managed to separate the State from the church sufficiently to permit "worship according to conscience" rather than edict. When the Renaissance reached England, therefore, poets, playwrights, and scholars had already been allowed the latitude necessary; the spirit of free inquiry was not to be menaced by a governmental hand of God.

All of this economic and intellectual progress remains meaningless unless related to the historical movement of which it is a part—unless explained as an effect of the expropriation of feudalism by the bourgeoisie. In this liberating attack on surviving medievalism, the rising middle classes played a revolutionary role. Their rise to economic power had already a sound beginning as early as 1485-1495; and during the hundred and fifty years that followed their strength so increased that a final outbreak was possible—the 1642 rebellion under Cromwell which was the attempt of the bourgeoisie to achieve the effect of their economic power by seizing political power. Obliged to practise thrift, Henry VII (1485-1509) encouraged the use of country gentlemen in the Privy Council—unpaid members of the middle classes functioning as justices of the peace. This allocation of political power to the non-nobility was inseparable from the rise of the cloth industry which had nation-wide effects on England's economy. The importation of Flemish weavers who could manufacture finished products stimulated the sheep-growing industry to such a degree that the capitalist type of agriculture gradually supplanted the subsistence type. By grabbing off and "enclosing" for pasture purposes land hitherto used for cultivation, the large bourgeois cloth promoters froze out the small farmer and created a wandering beggar class. A further economic change which increased the power of the bourgeoisie came as a result of Henry Eighth's break with Rome (1529). The dissolution of the abbeys and monasteries caused nation-wide land speculation resulting in widespread growth of profiteers.

By the time Elizabeth was entrenched in power (1558-1603) the revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie had reflected itself clearly—for example, in the type of architecture, which no longer concentrated on church or castle but on the domestic house. The middle classes had already obtained most of England's wealth. In power and influence they had approached the nobility so closely that a gentleman landowner had a perfect right to challenge any noble, from a duke down. Like her Tudor forebears, Elizabeth was prone to exclude nobles from important governmental posts in favor of intellectually capable members of the bourgeoisie. England was divided into numerous layers of classes, in accordance with the numerous gradations in wealth and rank. the lower classes, augmented by the freezing out of the subsistence farmer, failed to define themselves in any program of organized demands. There were pamphlets published against the government, as well as strong populist movements. But these attacks were relatively sporadic and caused no basic change in the system. Elizabeth's Poor Law, designed to solve upper class griefs caused by the beggar class that roamed the country, succeeded in stifling the flames of any national proletarian uprising . . . all to the deeper security of the bourgeoisie which had displaced the nobility as the economic basis of the crown.

Shakespeare, from what scraps we possess of his career, followed the usual pattern of a member of the lower middle class who made good. His native Stratford-on-Avon was a typical small metropolis, flourishing architecturally, stratified with a social hierarchy of its own, a select retiring place for solid citizens. His father, originally a farm tenant, became a glover and married the daughter of a rich farmer. Before Shakespeare left for London he also had married the daughter of a rich farmer. Most of the myths that have obscured his career — that he was a poacher, wife-deserter, Bohemian, held horses outside theatres—have been summarily disposed of[1]. We can now be reasonably sure that he went to London in his youth, made a great success

(1) J. S. Smart, *Shakespeare: Truth and Tradition* (Longmans, 1928). This documented investigation smashes the mystical notion of Shakespeare as an unlettered ignoramus inspired by God-given flashes of genius. Many of Shakespeare's foreign references supposedly lifted from translations never appear in the original.

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in the theatre, and returned to Stratford rich enough to buy the finest house in town and conformist enough to request a coat of arms for his household.

By 1592 he had become a leading actor in England's foremost theatrical company; before a decade had elapsed his advance was such that the playwright Chettle, with whom he became embroiled, apologized and mentioned that "divers of worship" had attested to Shakespeare's character and standing. The testifiers were the dashing young bucks among the nobility with whom he associated and for whose delectation he wrote his plays—Essex, Southampton, and other friends of Lord Strange. It is important to remember that in his intercourse with the intelligentsia of the nobility, Shakespeare knew that as a bourgeois he could go just so far and no further. Every acting company served some lord; in fact, each leading noble manor-house was in itself a miniature court, having its own retinue of artists, musicians, etc. Whatever his aspirations to noble rank may have been, there is no indisputable proof of them in his plays. Indeed, he gives no evidence of having seriously questioned the hierarchy of classes, either from the right or the left. And we find no indications of his having ever questioned the rightness of a system which exploited vast numbers of lower class Englishmen whom it compelled to live in poverty, filth, and servility. Shakespeare's much lauded "universality" and "human sympathy" fail to include the overwhelming numbers of the proletariat—which need hardly surprise us when we recognize that his works reveal him as a class-conscious member of the Elizabethan bourgeoisie.

But as a bourgeois Shakespeare achieved something which none of his contemporaries could approach: a breadth of knowledge of his class, of its aspirations and failures, of its reactions in the face of love, death, treachery, revenge, and so on. It is today common knowledge that a number of his characters were variations on his contemporaries and intended (probably) as designs for personal conduct—"patterns for ideal action"—all, of course, within the framework of values which his class took over and developed from the nobility. Nevertheless, within these limitations Shakespeare succeeded in shaping characters whose artistic realism can hardly be questioned; whose mouths are made to utter fragments of magnificent poetry and absorbing, ringing truth. Today it would be almost childish to argue the importance of his plays as psychological penetrations of character. No literate person needs to be told this. But it is necessary, for our present purpose, to emphasize the enormous value of Shakespeare as an illuminator of his contemporaries, of their sense of values, of the mind and character of the dominant Elizabethan classes. Thus for documentary as well as artistic reasons, Shakespeare's plays are of inestimable importance to revolutionary criticism.

Whether or not these plays can be enjoyed as plays is another matter. It is hardly necessary in this cursory note to discuss Shakespeare's magnificent stature as an artist; for the playgoer content with fragments almost any Shakespeare play holds delight; but for the enormous majority that judges a play in its totality, the problem is far more complicated. The Soviet theatre, for example, has regarded *Hamlet* as essentially a study of a neurotic whose vacillation and spectral fears are the stuff for humor rather than tragical pity. From an American playgoer aware of the genuine reasons for international war, Henry V's "stirring speech" to his men, which high school students are obliged to recite with the appropriate obligato of emotions—all that this can draw is an irreverent and wry smirk:

> Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;
> Or close the wall up with our English dead!
> In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
> As modest stillness and humility:
> But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
> Then imitate the action of the tiger;

The central theme of *King Lear* and his daughters loses contemporary significance to those who have arrived at a basic understanding of the family as an institution; who realize its origin as an economic measure and its future as something which must be made compatible with a classless society or disappear.

For similar reasons the historical plays must be regarded in an entirely new light: the light which Marxism as a world philosophy sheds upon all phenomena. It is no feat of perception to recognize in the plays of medievalism, drenched in blood, the assertive pride of a bourgeois mercilessly exposing the feudalism which his class had driven out. Nor is it difficult to see in the chronicle plays the class-conscious bourgeois in his emphasis on national unity writing powerful propaganda for the British empire. In a cursory note like this, however, we can do no more than indicate some of the facets which the thorough scholar must examine in a full consideration of Shakespeare.

That Shakespeare gives credence to supernatural manifestations now recognizable as illusory is, of course, known to everyone who has read him; but unless we understand this as a hang-over from medievalism we fail to understand its significance at the time Shakespeare lived. Alchemy, cabalism and all forms of occultism remained part of the mental climate well into the seventeenth century; they were part of the intellectual baggage not only of proletarians and nobility, but of enlightened writers as well. It is impossible to regard them, therefore, as constituting an attitude original with Shakespeare or as beliefs peculiar to him. When we meet them in his plays they may be recognized as anachronisms, frequently as character-devices, sometimes as convenient symbols, but hardly as essentials of the Shakespearian point of view. Indeed, it has been impossible, as students pointed out, to abstract from Shakespeare's body of work any consistent philosophic approach to life. At one time faith in man is adduced with conviction only to be discredited by sceptical statement elsewhere; and this is true of other indicative bases of his world view. Each character consistent with his experience and motivation contributes his particular philosophy—making a totality chaotic with contradiction: unreconciled relative truths.

In *The Essential Shakespeare* Prof. Wilson attempts to find one all-pervading world vision of Shakespeare's which sums up and reconciles the totality of the dramatist's utterances. In order to make Shakespeare fit in with his thesis, he is compelled to turn him into a religious platonist whose final, all-subsuming conception of life is a kind of apocalyptic vision—an ingenious demonstration indeed. But there is nothing incontrovertible in all this, and despite Wilson's fresh commentaries on *The Tempest* the argument utterly fails to convince. Shakespeare remains an individual consistently changing from one philosophical judgment to another, and apparently disinterested in—perhaps determined against—placing in any single world "mouthpiece" character an all-inclusive world philosophy capable of subsuming the conflicting ideas that weave in and out of his plays.

It would be much more reasonable, it seems to me, to substantiate a case for a sceptical Shakespeare, one who gleaned a modicum of truth here and there and elsewhere, but was unable to reconcile them into a satisfactory whole, and unable, therefore, to arrive at any serene, consistent or satisfying philosophy. Frequently, in fact, his searching mind reflects some of the contradictions of his period which was able to enjoy exquisite music and tender lyrics as well as the hangman's ability to disembowel victims before they lost consciousness. That Shakespeare went beyond his time would be difficult to prove from his work; but that he presents despite the strict limitations of his class attitude an unexampled record of his period—this is something which the historian as well as the esthetician in the Marxist critic can acknowledge with admiration. Although phases of his work can be matched by fragments from other poets, he stands head and shoulders above them by his single possession of their combined attributes; the breadth of his interests; the depth to which he penetrated representative characters from the classes he chose to understand; the degree and range by which he outdistanced his contemporaries in the poetic objectives of his period.

Perhaps this material for a note on Shakespeare may indicate the enormous need for a revolutionary evaluation of him; perhaps it may prove a suggestion to some Marxist literary scholar in search of a theme.

STANLEY BURNSHAW.

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Arming the Masses

FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM, by Joseph Stalin. International Publishers. 10c.

SHORTLY after the death of Lenin in 1924 Stalin delivered a series of lectures on the teachings of Lenin before the students of Sverdlov University in Moscow. These lectures, the *Foundations of Leninism,* have taken rank among the classics of Marxism. *Foundations of Leninism* has been translated into twenty-six languages; 10,000,000 copies have been sold in Russia alone. Formerly one could get it in *Leninism,* Vol. I, and in a forty-cent edition. Now here it is attractively printed in booklet form, ten cents a copy, to be carried around till mastered in your pocket as in a holster. The 100,000 copies distributed all over the country is a real spreading of arms among the American masses.

The greatest of living revolutionaries "breaks" the weapon of Leninism, shows us in masterly fashion the different principal parts, exposes the mechanics of the Second International, explains the workings of this mass weapon, explains why it cannot work in any other way, and points out the inevitable direction. These lectures are: Historical Method of Leninism, Theory of Dictatorship of the Proletariat, Peasant Question, National Question, Strategy and Tactics, The Party and Style of Work.

Let us look at the introduction and the first chapter to get the caliber of *Foundations of Leninism.* In the introduction Stalin gives us the splendid definition "Leninism is Marxism in the epoch of imperialism and the proletarian revolution." He then proceeds in the "Historical Roots of Leninism" to show how Leninism grew and developed in that period of imperialism in which the contradictions of capitalism are carried to that point where revolution begins. The three chief contradictions are: (1) the intensification of the struggle between capital and labor; (2) the sharpening of the struggle of the imperialist powers for world markets; (3) the awakening of national consciousness and the quickening of the revolutionary movements in the colonies. The World War gathered these contradictions into a single sheaf and threw them onto the scales, speeding up the revolutionary battles of the proletariat. The international situation gave birth to Leninism. Russia, the junction point of the contradictions of imperialism, becomes the home of Leninism, becomes the center of the revolutionary movement instead of Germany. Led by its Leninist Communist Party, Russia becomes the first country to overthrow capitalism and to forge a new weapon of struggle for the world proletariat: the theory and tactics of revolution.

For the American masses there are answers to many questions in this handbook of revolution. Take the "theoretical dogma" of the opportunists who assert that the proletariat cannot and ought not seize power if it does not itself constitute a majority in the country. Smedley Butler, in whom many honest antifascists strangely see an ally, asserted at a meeting of Pennsylvania farmers last year that so long as two-thirds of the people are not starving and are not well organized there can be no revolution. Stalin shows how the practical experience of the Russian proletariat proves such an assertion to be false. Take the whole problem of theory which the practical American worker is likely to consider a waste of time. Stalin shows how without theory there can be no real proletarian movement; theory and practice go together like the two sets of muscles which make up the biceps giving the mass fist its force. And the last chapter, called "Style of Work," should strike home particularly inasmuch as it shows that the true Leninist fighter is he whose work combines the wide revolutionary range of action with that American efficiency which is an antidote to "revolutionary" phrase mongering and fantastic invention.

All great political thinkers have been powerful writers. This is especially true of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, men of action as well as thinkers. The power of Stalin lies in this: that possibly more than the others his works move not only the vanguard but also the most backward of the masses everywhere today who thunder back their answers in revolutionary action. His style is simple, clean, concrete, reinforced with an iron logic, drawn from our every-day experiences. The words are warm, well used as a tool-handle which leaps in our fists immediately. He builds up unshatterable paragraphs which flash with imagery and wit and that finality which marks all sterling writing (see that paragraph in the report to the Sixteenth Congress, *Leninism,* Vol. II, in which he discusses the counter-revolutionaries, U.S.S.R.'s rejected commodities).

Stalin's style, his method of presenting a question, his exposition, his crystal summings up are being studied more and more by every careful revolutionary acting as a recruiting sergeant among the American masses and petty bourgeoisie. This style, this method can be of invaluable help to every revolutionary writer who strives to have his work help in this arming for growing struggles. Every report of Stalin is a dialogue, not the Socratic dialogue in which the master uses the other speaker as a stooge, but that dialogue in which the participants exchange views on equal terms and in the end are influenced by one another. Stalin's method reminds one of a fine story printed a number of years ago in International Literature about an old peasant who becomes a farm organizer. The green organizer cannot speak to gatherings of peasants. He finally hits on the idea of calling up a peasant and talking to him as though they are out alone in the field. And in this dialogue the problems of collectivization are threshed out before the whole village.

We hail this edition of *Foundations of Leninism.* Latest reports indicate that more than two-thirds of these 100,000 copies have been sold. The American masses are waiting for further arms.

BEN FIELD.

American Decadence Mapped

PATTERNS OF WOLFPEN, by Harlan Hatcher. Bobbs-Merrill. $2.50.
FEBRUARY HILL, by Victoria Lincoln. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.
SUMMER IN WILLIAMSBURG, by Daniel Fuchs. Vanguard Press. $2.50.
PORTRAIT OF EDEN, by Margaret Sperry. Liveright. $2.50.

EACH of these novels treats of a different section of the United States, and according to their testimony the land of the free and the home of the brave has turned into a shambles. Even *Patterns of Wolfpen,* which describes an isolated section of Kentucky in 1885, takes as its theme the destruction of beauty and tranquillity by "industrialism." The trouble begins when Sparrel Pattern, a type of great-hearted, ingenious American, sells a part of the land which his family has owned for four generations. Lumbermen buy it, and they not only lay waste the land but, bit by bit, they undermine the peace of the Pattern family, and finally Sparrel himself is killed in a loggers' brawl. Cynthia Pattern, our heroine, as painful a "dream-touched soul" as any I have met, finds solace in love.

In *February Hill,* whose setting is, presumably, the outskirts of Providence, Rhode Island, the author deals with a family of defiant outcasts. The grandmother goes in for rouge and earrings; the mother, Minna, is apparently modeled after Mae West, and supports the family by going on "week-end trips"; the husband is an ineffectual, educated drunkard; Jenny steals, and lives happily with her upstanding young smuggler; Joel takes after his father. Miss Lincoln makes this family a good deal more sympathetic than most respectable families, but to prefer the amoral to the moral is no longer startling. Today a novelist with insight starts from that point. To use this decadent family merely as a source of humor argues a lack of sensitivity.

Summer in Williamsburg dissects a Jewish slum section of Brooklyn. Daniel Fuchs, the twenty-five year old C. C. N. Y. graduate who wrote it, is clever and his technique is mature. His picture of Williamsburg has a good many of the qualities which made *Jews Without Money* so popular, though gentiles will find certain sections puzzling. There is a plethora of characters, including Philip Hayman and Cohen, both would-be writers, a miser, an aged philosopher, Davey the incipient gangster, Sam Linck and his mistress Marge, and a butcher named Sussman whose suicide in the first chapter gives Philip an op-

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portunity to collect Williamsburg phenomena, in the search for the cause. There is none, and in conclusion Philip-Daniel states, "Vainly . . . do I seek within me something magnificent, worth enthusiasm, worth labor, to guide me for the next forty or fifty years to come. Shall I continue in my quiet anesthesia and contemplate myself imperturbably? Self-possessed, controlled and analytical, above and indifferent to everything, but really dead years before my time?" This self-contemplation may account for Mr. Fuchs' dislike of Communism. It is a luxury which is sweet still to individualist writers, but which proletarian writers have abandoned because they do not want "the quiet anesthesia" which renders the addict "indifferent to everything, but really dead years before my time." His book is an entertaining and vivid picture of the surfaces of Williamsburg.

Portrait of Eden, which contains as many characters as *Summer in Williamsburg,* describes vividly the malodorous corruption of a Florida town named Eden. Church and politician ridden, it hugs its prejudices and superstitions to heart and refuses to allow Doctor MacIntyre and his Negro protege to introduce science or schools for Negroes into the town. It is a good book, though it tends to go melodramatic and the style occasionally turns lurid. It would have been even better if the author had got more deeply into the underlying antagonisms. She sees nothing ridiculous in having MacIntyre's campaign against something called "competition" financed by a millionaire, and her Negro, trapped in a Negro church and about to be lynched, finds nothing more important to say to his fellows than to inform them that they are "slaves of fear."

Score: one idyll, three pictures of decadence flavored with (a) humor (b) pessimism (c) reformism. They are all well-written and all readable (the least so being *Patterns of Wolfpen*). Assuming that this is a representative sampling, the conclusion seems to be that American novelists, other than those of outright proletarian inclinations, are, to a certain extent, aware of conditions and do not hesitate to portray them. But it is also true that most of them are still so lost in day dreams of individualism, and in the mists of reform, as not to see clearly what they look at.

SAMUEL LEVENSON.

Fire on the Andes

FIRE ON THE ANDES by Carleton Beals. Lippincott, $3.

THERE are two excellent reasons why *Fire on the Andes,* for all its limitations, is to be recommended: it is the best all round book on Peru in English; and despite the Chaco war—perhaps even because of it—Peru is shown to be still the most interesting country in South America. First because of its history. As the seat of the pre-Conquest Incan empire, it was at one time one of the most civilized nations that the world has seen; and what is even more significant, it reached a higher degree of socialized organization than was ever known before the birth of the Soviet Union. It was truly a co-operative commonwealth in which unemployment and starvation were unknown, in which a planned economy made possible an intensified agriculture, vast public works developments and a nation-wide material well-being in the face of geographic difficulties which neither Greece nor Rome nor pre-industrial Europe, as we know them, could have survived.

To-day, after 400 years of Christian love and exploitation, the bondage under Spanish feudalism and Anglo-American capitalism, Peru is one of the most backward countries in the western world. Beals sums up the history of Peru without mincing words: "Ancient Peru was more prosperous, with a larger population, with more guarantees for decent livelihood, with a more integrated system of communications, with more advanced agriculture . . . than exists today centuries later. If many European mechanical contrivances were lacking, nevertheless, by any comparative standard, neither the Spaniards nor the governments of the Republic have justified their right to rule." The conclusions to be drawn from this are obvious.

Such has been Peru's historic rôle in the past. But now the Peruvian Indian is rapidly preparing to strike at his exploiters. Time and time before he has revolted only to be ruthlessly slaughtered after each defeat. At this moment, however, there is every indication that the day of reckoning is close at hand. And when it comes, according to Beals, "perhaps the first argarian Soviet State in the Americas will arise in this region." The Chaco war may yet play a part in this momentous upheaval. Bolivia's defeat, ever more imminent, might well be the occasion of a serious revolt by well-armed Bolivian Indians which would undoubtedly provide the spark to set off a Peruvian revolution. Whatever such an event might finally lead to, it could easily bring about a new Bolivian-Peruvian Communist federation.

We referred above to the limitations of this book. Perhaps they are less serious here than in the rest of the author's work. Beals has been a valuable ally in exposing the true nature of Latin America's servitude. He has had the knack of digging out the facts and getting them into print for everybody to see. However, all too often he fails to interpret with sufficient realism the very facts which his own realistic method has helped him to collect and put before the reader. The result is that Beal's work has been that of a first-class muck-raker and a highly entertaining "travel" writer rather than that of a thoroughgoing political and social analyst. But he is still young and is learning. In *Fire on the Andes* he is less open to this criticism than before. He clearly undertands, e.g., the social-fascist nature of "Aprismo", the essential opportunism of Haya de la Torre and the class basis of Peru's coming revolution.

Yet nowhere does he take time out to explain why Communism presents the only satisfactory solution to Peru's and all Latin America's problems, though his own data cry aloud for a definite appraisal. He spends page after page describing scenery and piquant anecdotes, yet he has only a few lines for Mariátegui, as great a thinker as the western hemisphere has known. He readily concedes his importance as a literary figure but sees nothing especially interesting in the fact that Mariátegui was a Marxist, the most brilliant in the Americas; nor does he point out the tremendous influence which his writings, and through them Marxism, now wields in Peru's seething revolutionary movements. It is the reviewer's guess, nevertheless, that Beals read Mariátegui in preparing this book and that the cripped Peruvian Communist is at least partly responsible for the tighter grasp of fundamentals which distinguishes *Fire on the Andes* from its author's previous work.

FRANK L. GORDON.

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Brief Review

PILGRIMAGE OF IDEAS, or the re-education of Sherwood Eddy. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

SHERWOOD EDDY has attempted a survey of the world here. He has been exposed to living conditions in most of its countries and has preserved his Y.M.C.A. integrity through the war, the change from passivity to active rebellion in the Far East, the collapse into dictatorship of Western Europe. The beginning of his pilgrimage was Kansas in the '70s; he reached a point where he "ceased to be a liberal asking alms of capitalism," became "a radical demanding the justice of socialism." That may have been his goal but how far from it his early mis-education (which he acknowledges openly and well) has washed him is shown by his belief in Buchmanism and that pacifism is the final step in the class struggle. "I will not hate and I will not kill. I think I have found a better weapon than a machine gun. I would try to use the same creative and constructive weapon which Gandhi wields today and which was wielded by Jesus of Nazareth centuries ago." No wonder fascists accept such smug and self-righteous passiveness of the do-nothing liberal as an invitation.

THE MAKER OF SIGNS, by Whit Burnett. New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas. $2.50

These short stories by the editor of Story are, to some extent, an excellent explanation of Mr. Burnett's enthusiasm for William Saroyan's work. (Story was the first periodical to publish Saroyan.) Whatever failings Saroyan may have as a short story writer, it must be admitted that he writes with a vitality that few modern bourgeois writers have. Mr. Burnett's stories, on the whole, lack vitality. Many of those in this volume are pale compositions, impressive for their grace, but disappointing in their inability to create any effects that we can respond to sympathetically. His friend Edward J. O'Brien, that God-Almighty judge of short stories, says of Mr. Burnett: "He arrests life and presents it with a cool intensity at its most significant moments." It is good criticism, in spite of the fact that O'Brien meant to be entirely complimentary. Burnett does arrest life—to the extent that you are constantly thinking of still-life pictures when you are reading him; and his intensity is so cool as to leave you somewhat cold. The best short stories in this volume are those where time doesn't stand still: "The Under Thing," a memorable study of an old man who commuted on a ferry for years, always with a sense of loneliness; "Three Thousand Times a Day" and "One of Those Literary Guys," two stories that treat realistically with the experiences of young newspaper reporters, and one or two others that have American expatriates as their chief protagonists.

DEISM IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AMERICA, by Herbert M. Morais. Columbia University Press. $3.50.

American deism had two sources: the English rationalism of Locke and Newton and the Revolution of 1688, and the more militant anti-clericalism of Voltaire and Volney and the French Revolution of 1792. Deism was very common among the bourgeois-revolutionary Founding Fathers of this country, but it was played down for reasons of social prudence and the fear that if it spread among the masses they might become less tractable. This was especially true after the reaction in America toward the turn of the century, when Robespierre, atheism and Jeffersonianism were lumped together in a kind of red scare. "Consequently, any intellectual who popularized deism stamped himself so far as the upper classes were concerned as an enemy of society." But Thomas Paine, Elihu Palmer, John Fitch and others did start pro-French deistic societies, were furiously attacked, and found their chief support in the working-classes. Lacking a firm economic base, the movement weakened before the spread of camp-meeting evangelism. But it planted the traditional atheist in the American village, and at some points extending its criticism to the rights of property, prepared for the work of Robert Dale, Owen and Fanny Wright and other pre-Civil War reformers. This book recognizes the class influences on religious attitudes, but it is not well synthesized, and gives an effect of repetition in its too many, too brief references.

Book Notes

Included in the courses for the Winter term at the New York Workers' School at 35 E. 12th Street, is one given under the auspices of THE NEW MASSES on the Revolutionary Interpretation of Modern Literature. The lecturers will include Granville Hicks, Joseph Freeman, Joshua Kunitz, Stanley Burnshaw, Henry Hart, Isidor Schneider and others. The Workers' School has grown into a vital institution. Its courses are a corrective to the falsifications of capitalist education and a powerful force for a realistic understanding of the contemporary world. The term begins January 7th. Registration is going on this week.

Who says our public men, unlike the British and French higher-ups, are not great cultural figures? Some of them through ghostly agencies, others by their own good pens, have written books. No less a figure than his Brass-Buttonship General Hugh Johnson, joined the department-store autograph bees, signing two masterpieces, ***Williams on Service,*** and ***Williams at West Point,*** aimed (literally aimed) at our younger generation.

Liveright, Inc., wants all our readers to know that George Moore's ***Story Tellers' Holiday,*** which they are reissuing, was once violently attacked for obscenity. We get the point, Liveright, Inc.

Choosing the prize blurb of 1934 would be a hard job. Our choice would go to the veteran, Alexander Woollcott, who confessed that he went "quietly mad over *Lost Horizon.*" Mad, maybe. But quietly, Alec? Never.

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Art

Design for a Parasite Class

WITH the great success of the 1925 Salon of Decorative Arts in Paris the modern movement in design achieved such prestige in Europe as to warrant its importation to our shores. A few of our own designers, mostly architects, had been pioneering since the beginning of the century and earlier, but these were isolated efforts, practically unknown to the public. About 1927-28 a few department stores in New York City gave the movement its debut in this country with several large and well-publicized exhibitions which immediately achieved a succés d'estime. Just as Printemps, Bon Marché, and Galeries Lafayette were the main purveyors to the French public so Lord & Taylor, Saks, Macy, Altman, etc., became the carriers of modernism here. The revolt against the cheap and gaudy vulgarity and stupid eclecticism of the Brown Decades broke out into what looked like a real revolution as the successes of the department store exhibitions encouraged more and more designers to "turn modern." On the whole the effect was salutary, even though great quantities of junk and rubbish were perpetrated in the name of "modernistic." The return to simple lines and clean surfaces was a necessary and healthy reaction to the meaningless chewing-gum ornamentation and "period styles" that afflicted (and still dominate) most of our design.

But the modern movement in design has virtually died a-borning. As a force in contemporary design it is practically used up. If any evidence of its sterility (in its present form) is necessary the exhibition of Contemporary American Industrial Art at the Metropolitan Museum amply supplies it. It is poorer in quality and quantity than the 1929 exhibit at the Museum, and far inferior to almost any of the early department store exhibits. For an exhibition purporting to represent contemporary design it is pathetic. A few hackneyed and trivial interiors, and a mere handful of objects, for the most part mediocre and not too well selected, make up this exhibit.

Why this decline of the modern movement almost before it had well begun?

Obviously it is beyond the scope of a short article to attempt a thorough and detailed study of so complex a phenomenon but we can touch on some of its salient aspects. One of the essentials of any healthy and progressive culture is its root in the masses of the people. For modern design to "take hold" and grow in this country two component and interacting parts of a single process are necessary.

1. Wide education of the population, child and adult, to a better set of esthetic values (by education I mean not only the schools but also those important forces of opinion-moulding such as the press, the radio, books, magazines, etc.) and

2. The economic and social structure which could make such a program of education possible, and what is more important, provide the public with the purchasing power to buy well-designed commodities.

The movement for good design is suffering from inanition precisely because it has failed in the above-mentioned essentials. Even if it were possible to fulfil the first requisite (which it is not) the second is quite beyond the social and economic system under which we are living. Even today after some years of intensive plugging at manufacturers by our modern designers one cannot buy decent simple furnishings or well-designed industrial commodities that are within the means of the worker of modest income. The poorly-designed junk is far cheaper in price, and so long as this is true just so long will those who buy and "count their pennies" buy the poorly-designed objects. Some of our more ardent reformers in the field of design have fulminated against the manufacturers. "If only they were willing to have good designers design their products we could quickly bring about a revolution in public taste, and raise the standards of design." But the manufacturer is interested primarily in profits, not in elevating the level of public taste and standards of design. Only if he thinks he can make a profit will he change to new and better design, and the number of such manufacturers has been significantly small. If he is able to sell his poorly-designed article at a profit there will be little or no chance to get him to change. He prefers to exploit the cultural backwardness of the public by giving them the vulgar design to which they have been accustomed. He can hire incompetent designers for less salary and sell the product easily. So one comes up against the vicious circle which a decadent capitalist society makes inevitable.

The modern movement in design has with little and few exceptions been fashioned to serve bourgeois snobocracy. This is due not to any conscious intent on the part of the designer but to the demands of the capitalist market. If only the wealthy can afford to buy modern design then the designers will provide for that class. The commodity is fashioned to suit the demands and character of the purchaser. One has only to look at the exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum to realize how thoroughly it is permeated with the habits and mental atmosphere of the rich bourgeoisie. *Here is design for a parasite class.* That is not to say however that there are no good elements to be found here. On the contrary, the designer who would design appropriately for the working class would make use of the best elements in modern design, *but in a new synthesis.* His design will be conditioned not only by the class for whom he creates but also by the historic needs of that class. A few modern designers who have come to understand the nature of capitalist society and its inherent barriers to a logical and decent esthetic, have nevertheless held out for various forms of modernism in their bourgeois adaptations as being quite suitable to Socialist and Communist societies . . . all that would be necessary would be to make these super-fine things available to everyone. A sort of esthete's version of the automobile manufacturer's slogan of "Two Cars in Every Garage" . . . only in this case it would read "A Mies von der Rohe Country Villa for Every Worker." This sort of thinking fails to comprehend one of the most fundamental truths about design, namely that *design has a content.* Not in any absolute or mechanical sense, of course, but undeniably the design of a period is inter-related to the socio-economic structure in which it was created, and is of a certain historic period. So with this exhibition. It is the expression of a section of a definite class. It is of interest to rich brokers' wives who are doing the town house over this season and are not quite decided on whether to make the living room Tudor or Modernistic; to the designer who is looking for a commission or two these hard days; to the decorators and manufacturers who think they may be able to get a cut of what little business turns up; to the stage and movie-set designer who must know what the smart Park Ave. apartment will be like this season so that he can provide the proper background for the new Guild conversation-piece about the sophisticated Younger Set. For the rest of the population it has little meaning or relevance and for the working class in particular it is a brutal reminder of the "charm and grace" with which its exploiters live.

STEPHEN ALEXANDER.

SAAR BASIN PLEBISCITE

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which way for the American student?

Maria Halberstadt, German Exile
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Current Theatre

SAILORS OF CATTARO, by Friedrich Wolf (translated by Keene Wallis and adapted by Michael Blankfort). Civic Repertory. Far and away the most important play in New York, with moments of masterly drama; on the whole brilliantly acted against the truly magnificent set by Mordecai Gorelik. Telling the story of the Feb. 1, 1918 rebellion of the Austrian fleet in the Bay of Cattaro, the action follows history closely. But dramatist Wolf's posing of the problem of individual as against collective leadership confuses rather than clarifies the issues. Full of provocative problems for the revolutionary theatre, this third play of the Theatre Union is required attendance of all readers of this department. Cheapest seat 30 cents, tax free. (The Group Theatre, incidentally, advises us that we were wrong in having stated [THE NEW MASSES, Dec. 25] that *Sailors of Cattaro* was offered to them only to be rejected.)

Romeo and Juliet. Martin Beck Theatre. Katharine Cornell's production excellently staged by Guthrie McClintic. The most refreshing interpretation of this text, and one of the finest Shakespearian productions we have ever seen; guided by taste, intelligence, and originality. Basil Rathbone's Romeo is below the level of the other acting, which is generally excellent.

New Theatre Night: Sunday, Jan. 6. Civic Repertory. Revolutionary plays and dances. *Waiting for Lefty,* a new play by Clifford Odets and the Theatre Union's prize-winning play *God's in His Heaven,* produced by the cast of *Gold Eagle Guy.* Also Anna Sokolow, one of the most brilliant revolutionary dancers in America, in a group of solo dances. New Theatre evenings are indispensable to everyone interested in the left-wing theatre. Cheapest seat 25 cents (at the box office or 114 W. 14th St.).

Tobacco Road. Forrest Theatre. Erskine Caldwell's novel dramatized by James Kirkland. Presents an incredible amount of startling facts about the lives of poor white Georgia farmers, though not the whole truth, of course. One of the best plays in New York, now in its second year.

Birthday. 49th Street Theatre. A widow wants to remarry and her sixteen-year old daughter is pathological on the subject, but before the final curtain love conquers all. Peggy Wood fails in her desperate attempt to vitalize one of the most intolerable dramatic bores that we have ever suffered.

Recruits. Artef Theatre (247 W. 48th St.) A brilliant analysis of social forces in the Ghetto during the 1800-1850 period. If you understand Yiddish make certain to attend. The production is exquisitely beautiful.

The Children's Hour. Maxine Elliot Theatre. The lives of two school teachers wrecked by the actions of a pathological schoolgirl. Miss Hellman's faultless dialogue covers up many a technical hole; Kathryn Emery and Ann Revere are excellent actresses, and the morbidity is sensational enough to bring superlatives from the press and crowds to the box office. Indeed, this play has sufficient surface qualities to impress those who are prone to mistake an unhappy ending for a play of real worth.

Gold Eagle Guy. Group Theatre (at Morosco Theatre). J. Edward Bromberg gives a first-rate performance of "Gold Eagle Guy" Button, author Melvin Levy's improvisation on the character of the merchant marine prince, Robert Dollar. Levy removes most of the shams from the capitalist type, yet Guy Button is altogether too fascinating a scoundrel. Despite the thinness of the play it is important as a picture of capitalist corruption and thoroughly enjoyable as theatre.

Merrily We Roll Along. Music Box Theatre. "What shall it profit a man that he gain the whole world and lose his soul"—in a well-built melodrama applied to Dorothy Parker, George Gershwin and other contemporary immortals. Much triteness and technical trickiness, but worth seeing if only to approve Walter Abel's acting and to bewail George S. Kaufman's wasted talents.

Revenge with Music. New Amsterdam. A jeering folk-tale of Spain with that certain something done to it that Broadway knows so well how to do; consequently it's hard to tell what the jeering's about. Good music and some funny moments.

United Workers' Organizations Benefit. Sunday Night, Jan. 13, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre. Members of the Group Theatre in two revolutionary plays: *Dimitroff,* by Art Smith and Elia Kazan, and *Waiting for Lefty.* Added feature: a program of new music by Soviet composers played by the Symphonic Orchestra of the Pierre Degeyter Club of New York. Cheapest seat 30 cents (on sale at the Workers' Bookshops).

Stevedore, by Paul Peters and George Sklar. Selwyn Theatre. Chicago. The second production of the Theatre Union, which was not only the most successful working-class drama of American authorship, but New York's most important play for two seasons. Of course, attendance required of all Chicago readers of THE NEW MASSES.

Within the Gates. National Theatre. Sean O'Casey's attack on realism rides through two delightful scenes into an insufferable second half. His bitter attack on "church" religion is "resolved" by much febrile toutings of subjective mysticism. The "Down and Outers" of the contemporary world turn out to be the masses of humanity who are bankrupt in spirit. But the acting, staging, music and choreography of part one are worth seeing.

The Distaff Side. Booth Theatre. Well-acted, arbitrarily pieced-together "problem" play about an upper middle-class English girl who has her troubles: which should she marry, money or art? The World-Telegram thinks it is "a masterpiece of our time" and you will think it a sorry spectacle—a once promising playwright spending good talent on what is relatively zero in the scheme of 1934.

Valley Forge. Guild Theatre. Maxwell Anderson's frequently beautiful study of the War of Independence turns out to be incipient fascist propaganda. He retails the facts about the passion for profits which actuated the gentlemen of the Continental Congress; he suggests that those who talked revolution, ran it and made our laws were as bad as their descendants in Congress and Wall Street. Industrial autocracy and rich man's law must go—and Anderson's candidate is a strong man—an upright wolf who likes sheep and will lead them away from corruption into the vales of peace and freedom. Many beautiful passages, much fine acting (Philip Merivale, Stanley Ridges, Victor Kilian). S. B.

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Between Ourselves

THE Chicago Friends of THE NEW MASSES have arranged a discussion meeting for Wednesday evening, Jan. 16, with Joseph Edelman, writer and lecturer, as the speaker. The subject will be "The History of THE NEW MASSES and its place in American Life," and the meeting will be held in the Medical and Dental Arts Building, 185 North Wabash, Room 818, at 8.30 p. m. This is the first of a series of monthly meetings in Chicago to be held by the Friends of THE NEW MASSES.

The New York Public Library's file of the monthly NEW MASSES is incomplete, and the director, H. M. Lydenberg, has asked us to help them. Readers who possess copies of the monthly, in good condition, and who have no further use for them, are urged to send them in to the director, Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street, New York.

An announcement of the results of our appeal to our readers for a $10,000 expansion fund will be made shortly.

NEW MASSES LECTURES

Corliss Lamont will speak on the Soviet Union Friday evening, Jan. 11, at the Brighton Workers Club, 3200 Coney Island Avenue, Brighton Beach.

Arrangements are under way for a speaking tour for William Browder to the Pacific coast to take place between Jan. 11 and Feb. 2.

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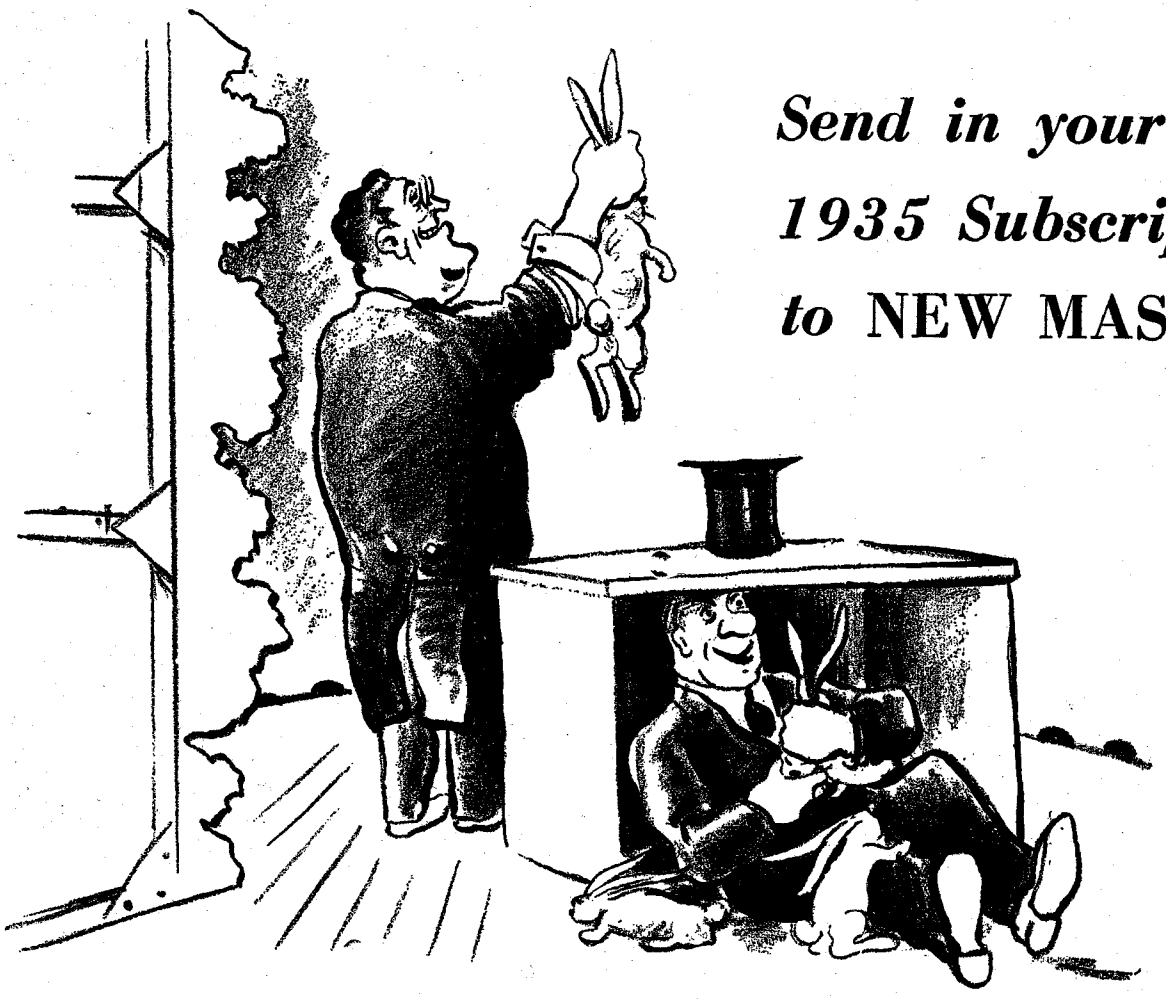

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